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A History of the Mandi State,

Prof. Man Mohan, Ma., T.e.s.

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Preface.

WHEN I accepted His Highness's invitation to write a history of his State I did not realise the difficulties with which the task would be attended. I expected to have the pleasure of carrying on historical research with piles of musty old document at my table : I looked forward to handling valuable manuscripts : I hoped that the descendants of the old families of the State would cheerfully place at my disposal whatever historical material they possessed. I was greatly disappointed. The devasting earthquake of 1905, and the terrible fire of 1916 had completely destroyed the State archives; and with one or two exceptions no one would allow me to see the old papers in their possession.

Until comparatively recent times, there were no secretaries in the Indian States, and all the papers and documents were kept by the important officials at their own houses. Ministeries and administrations changed, and the displaced officials, hugging the belief that the State papers would somehow and sometime be of use to them in regaining their lost power and prestige, smuggled them away to a place of security or deposited them in dark and safe places in their houses. I feel convinced that in Mandi, like other States, there must be hundreds of such documents, crumbling away with age, but jealously guarded from the evil eye of the student of historical research. The hope is still nursed that by virtue of these heirlooms the family would rise again to power; and I failed miserably in inducing the custodians to lend me their manuscripts. The only family, which fully cooperated with me in my research, and without hesitation placed at my disposal all the historical material it possessed, was that of Upadha Dhari whose devotion and loyalty to the Mandi Raj forms one of the brightest chapters of its history. Upadha Jai Dev—the son of Dhari, and Pandit Yadupati—the grandson of the latter—gave me every assistance in my work, and I gratefully acknowledge their help.

In spite of the fact that Diwan Dina Nath, the Chief Minister, had instructed the officials, all over the State to collect historical material very little of any importance was forthcoming. I was, therefore, considerably handicapped in my work, and was more

than once inclined to give it up. Wherever I felt quite helpless for want of proper historical material, I had to depend on conjecture, and I cannot claim for some of my facts and dates that definiteness which ought to be found in a book of history.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to His Highness the Raja Sahib for giving me every facility in accomplishing this task; and but for the encouragement given to me by his Chief Minister Rai Bahadur Diwan Dina Nath, I could never have undertaken the writing of this book. His advice was most valuable, and I cannot be sufficiently thankful to him for all his help. It is my pleasant duty also to thank Rai Sahib Bakhshi Brahm Das, Revenue Secretary, for his many useful suggestions and criticisms. His great knowledge of the State and its people unravelled many a mystery and cleared up many a knotty point. Professor Sri Ram Sharma of the D. A. V. College, Lahore, gave me considerable help in elucidating and verifying facts and dates, and in revising the manuscript, and making many useful corrections therein. Last, but not the least, I must offer my homage to Dr. Hutchinson of Chamba on whose unique knowledge of the hill states is based much that has been written about them.

I feel conscious—now that the work is completed—of many shortcomings and defects therein, but I can console myself that they are not all of my own making. I have tried to do my best under very trying circumstances.

M.M.

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CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE.

MANDI is the largest hill State in the Punjab inset in the British District of Kangra. Its area is about 1200 square miles. On the north it is bounded by the Tahsils of Palampur and Kullu in the District of Kangra. The southern boundary marches along the States of Bilaspur and Suket. On the east again Kullu surrounds it and here, the boundaries are, for a large part, natural. The river Beas with its tributaries, the Bah, the Tirthan and the Ropru along with the Nargu range separates it here from the surrounding British territory. The western boundary is formed by the Bilaspur State and the Hamirpur and Palampur Tahsils. Here again the boundaries are, for some part at least, natural; the rivers Binu, Bakhar and Sir cutting it off from the neighbouring territories.

Mandi is a very hilly country. A look at the map gives one the impression that mountains have been scattered broadcast in the State. Yet three distinct series of hills can be traced. The Jalori range and the Nargu range run along the eastern border. The first rises to a height of 11060 feet at Shikari Devi, while the Nargu rises even higher running upto 13249 feet. These series of hills are broken into by the Bhabu and the Dulchi Passes which lead the Palampur-Mandi road into Kullu, the first in Summer, and the second in Winter. The centre of the Mandi State is occupied by the Ghogar range while on the west runs the Sikandar range. The Ghogar runs upto a height of about 7000 feet. In its lap is situated Jhatingri, the Summer capital of the State. It also contains rich veins of Salt which is quarried at Gumma and Drang at present. Some other localities may develop rich salt mines if refining processes could be made available. Mandi salt, crude as it is, supplies the local needs of the people, who for medical reasons, sometimes prefer it to the more refined Punjab Salt. These mines can be more profitably worked if the endless complications between the Govrenment of India and the Mandi State, about the price of the salt and the duty leviable by the British Government thereon, could be satisfactorily solved.

The Sikandar Range is associated with the traditional attack on Mandi by Sikandar Lodhi (1489-1517 A.D.) the Pathan Emperor

of Delhi. The memories of this invasion have been preserved in the stories of hidden treasure presumably concealed in the hills at that time. The general altitude of the country records great variations, falling from 13249 feet at Nargu in the North-east to 1800 feet at Sandhol in the West.

As is usual in a mountainous country the area is broken up into many fragments, due partly to the mountain ridges running into each other, partly to the course of the river Beas and its tributaries. The Beas, which enters the State from the north east and flows in a north westernly direction cuts up the State into two unequal parts. A large number of tributaries from the north as well as the south further subdivide the country. Thus almost all the water of the State is drained into the Beas, the only exception being the river Sir running along the western boundary of the State and flowing into the far off Sutlej. The mountainous nature of the course of these streams makes them almost useless as means of communication except for sending down wood. It would rather seem that they would be equally useless for purposes of irrigation. Yet the villagers have in some measure harnessed almost all the streams into the service of their crops and have dug up small channels for that purpose. The river Beas itself serves as a convenient means of sending down timber. The river Son washes down a little gold which is collected by the local gold washers.

Thus the country generally consists of mountainous fragments cut off from one another and rather difficult of approach. The only area which can be dignified with the name of plain is the Suketi valley consisting of a series of plateaus. The hilly nature of the State made a large number of forts imperative under the old system of administration. Tradition has it that Mandi possessed at one time as many as three hundred and sixty forts, but of these only about a dozen stand intact to-day. The most famous among them all is the fort of Kamalgarh whereon has depended the independence of the State time after time. It is situated on the Hamirpur border at an elevation of 4471 feet, and was built by Raja Suraj Sen about two centuries ago. It was considered almost impregnable. Its approaches are difficult, and could all be commanded by the garrison stationed in the fort. It consists of a series of six citadels, one above another, and this always made its capture very difficult. The changed conditions of warfare have now rendered it almost useless, and it is garrisoned at present by five soldiers ! Its armoury, however, contains many interesting old arms and weapons. Lying so near the snowy Himalayas the State gets an ample and well distributed supply of rainfall. Yet the rains always present a difficult problem in the State. The varying altitude and the differing nature of the soil make

rather tantalising demands on the gods of rain! What would benefit one part of the State might prove injurious to another. Mandi town itself records a yearly average of about 50 inches, whereas higher heights must be receiving a much larger quantity of rain. Failure of rains is rather exceptional, and even tradition does not record any very serious famine. The snow falls usually over the higher heights though even Mandi (2500 feet) is known to have experienced it.

The varying height of the State makes any general statement about climate impossible. The lower heights, of course, receive their due share of heat, and the winter is naturally rather trying in the higher regions. The rains usually form the most unhealthy part of the year when malaria claims its toll. Cases of Pneumonia are rather frequent in the Suketi valley during winter. Speaking generally, however, the State is fairly healthy.

From the very nature of the case the means of communication are neither plentiful nor very comfortably. For internal communication mule tracks and foot paths usually serve the purpose. The central Arian trade as well as the needs of export provide Mandi with some better roads as well. Till recently the road from Mandi to Hoshiarpur, which takes the Ladakh and Yarkand trade, through Una, was the most important route. Even now it brings the State within the shortest distance of a railway station. It is now believed to be motorable. Its importance has now been eclipsed by the Palampur-Mandi road which is motorable and on which lies Jogendar Nagar the headquarters of the Mandi Hydro-Electric scheme. The rise of this town and the completion of the Hydro-Electric Works would make it all the more important and would connect Mandi, through Pathankote, to the outer world. Kullu and Simla are approachable by three roads which cross the Jalori and the Nargu ranges. As to ancient Rome, all roads seem to lead to Mandi.

Mandi forms a part of the Imperial postal system and is linked up by telegraph as well.

The faulty means of communication make the rise of towns impossible. Till recently Mandi was the only town of any magnitude. It was founded by Raja Ajbar Sen in about 1526 A.D. It lies well in the centre of the State and commands all the roads. A new town is rising at Shanon (now rechristened Jogendar Nagar) where the headquarters of the Hydro-Electric Works have been established. Most of the trade is carried on at the time of the fairs and festivals of which there are many. Pedlars sometimes also serve as the means of connecting the villagers with the outside world.

With such scanty means of communication, Mandi has to be almost self sufficient in its staple requirements. Naturally agriculture forms the main occupation of the people; about 81 per cent. of them being engaged therein. Still more naturally subsistence farming abounds and not many crops are sown with an eye to making money, Rice of several grades and varieties, wheat, maize, millets, barley and potatoes are usually grown. There is a fair sprinkling of some pulses, grams, oilseeds, tobacco and poppy. The State owns two tea gardens as well. Vegetable and fruit gardening is not much practised as yet. Only recently the State has acquired one of the best orchards in the Kullu Valley and the present Ruler has been making efforts to introduce fruit gardening in the State. The soil in the State was examined some times back by the Fruit Specialist to the Punjab Government and he has pronounced it eminently suitable for the purpose. It is understood that the State intends to take a lead in this matter and before long we may find a prosperous fruit industry here.

Agriculture is rather a tough business in a mountainous country, and naturally only a small part of the area of the State is under cultivation. Yet agriculture is diligently practised and with the help of the subsidiary industries the State is maintaining 151 persons per square mile. The cultivator is able to eke out a living by certain subsidiary industries which he practises. The most important among them all is stock-raising. The rich pastures of the State supply excellent grazing grounds and the people are able to raise a much larger stock than would otherwise be possible. A population of less than two lacs possesses as many as half a million heads of cattle, sheep and goats. The buffaloes and cows number about a lac and a half and supply the people with ghee in which a brisk trade is carried on with the neighbouring districts. The sheep serve for wool which is locally woven while the goats are usually passed on to Simla butchers or consumed locally for meat. Thus the grazing grounds form a great natural gift to the country. They even tempt the outside Gujars as well who come with their flocks and graze them here. The pastures also serve as a source of income to State, about ten per cent. of the total revenue being contributed by them.

Another subsidiary industry is bee-keeping. Very crude methods are in use and there is great room for improvement. The Mandi honey is sent out to Hoshiarpur where it fetches a good price.

The forests also make their contribution to the economic well-being of the people. About 16 per cent. of the total area is under demarcated forests wherein the villagers possess certain rights of usage. Undemarcated forests wherein the people possess much more

extensive and unlimited rights cover another large part of the State. Herein the villagers get their timber for building purposes, get their fuel-wood and procure their manures. Besides these rights of usage a large number of labourers is employed in wood cutting and the Mandi forest labourers are becoming so adept in their profession that their services are highly prized in the surrounding areas. So far the forests are being exploited for timber purposes alone and even as such bring in a large amount of money to the State treasury. These forests are rich in Deodar, Spruce, and Fir, and there is some sprinkling of Pine, Chil, though of a poorer quality, is also found in abundance.

Another unexploited source lies in the medicinal herbs in which the State is believed to abound. So far only a small trade is carried on in certain well known herbs; but if well organised attempts are made, it is possible to develop a brisk trade in them.

The State is rich in mineral wealth as well. Besides the Salt mines already mentioned, rich veins of iron also have been traced. It is interesting to note that Mandi iron was exploited in Akbar's days as well as is apparent from a mention of it in the Ain-i-Akbari. It is a pity that modern conditions have made its smelting difficult. The completion of the Hydro-Electric Works, however, would make a new instrument of smelting available in the shape of cheap electricity and it is hoped, that the production of Mandi iron would then become a practical commercial proposition. Some coal is also found though tests so far made have not yet proved it of much value. As said above the waters of the Son wash down some gold and it is possible that a rich vein of gold may some day be struck somewhere in the State. The State quarries usually supply the local needs and there is not much chance of their development.

As explained already the Mandi State has to be mainly self-sufficient for obvious reasons. Besides agriculture and its subsidiary industries, some other industries also exist to supply the local needs of the people. Most of the cloth generally worn is woven locally, rice beer is fermented by the peasant themselves and all carpentering is done by local labour. The salt mines, the forest lumbering, the slate quarries employ a large number of skilled labourers. Hawk-catching also provides occupation to a few. The carrying trade is in the hands of Labanas. State service, both Civil and Military, usually falls to the lot of Rajputs, Khatris and Brahmans. The lower castes are enterprising enough to leave the State and seek more remunerative work elsewhere, usually in the neighbouring districts.

Thus the general economic condition of the people seems to be fairly satisfactory. Enough food grains are produced to suffice for the needs of the people and the margin of reserve is fairly large to allow them to obtain them in a year of scarcity. Most of the produce suffices to meet the local needs, but there is generally a surplus in rice, wheat, potatoes, salt, ghee, goats, slates, woollen cloth and other miscellaneous articles which are exported. The imports include cotton piece goods, sugar, oil, khaddar and household utensils. The opening of the State to outside influences on the Palampur side is bound to have a great effect on its trade.

But it should be remembered that though the total national income of the State is large, its distribution seems to be so faulty that the standard of living in the State is extremely low. *Begar* which, until recently, was in vogue in the State kept a large population of the State under an economic thraldom which ate into their vitality. It is hoped that its recent abolition would now work a change for the better.

The opening of the Mandi Hydro-Electric Works is bound to usher in a new era in the economic life of the people. The works have been undertaken by the Punjab Government for the supply of energy for ordinary and industrial purposes. The Mandi State has made a gift of the site and of its rights in the river Uhl which is being dammed for the purpose. In return a certain quantity of energy would be provided free to the State and additional supplies would be available at special concession rates. The undertaking has already effected the State largely, improving its means of communication, supplying work to a large number of labourers, and creating a brisk demand for timber. When the work is completed, and the supply of energy is available, it is bound to have a far reaching effect on the economic life of the State.

For the tourist Mandi has its own attractions. Trout fishing is now abundant in the waters of the Uhl and other good varieties of fish are also found. Mandi is a happy hunting ground; pheasant shooting is common, bears, leopards, wild boar and Gural supply big game shooting.

The population of the State amounts to 1,85,048 according to the last census. There has been a substantial increase during the last forty years. It is hoped that the abolition of the Begar, the systematic utilization of forest products, better arrangement of the salt mines, and slate quarries, and last, but not the least, the opening up of the Mandi Hydro-Electric Works would speed up the expansion of the State and the next census may record a further rise in the population.

Almost all the castes are included in the population. But about one half of it consists of Kanets, a caste with an interminate status. They do most of the agricultural work in the State, and now that they have been partly freed from the shackles of *Begar* it is possible that they would make a suitable contribution to the welfare of the State. The lower castes form about one quarter of the whole population. They all belong to what have been described as the depressed classes. Brahmans form about ten per cent of the population, whereas the Rajputs contribute about four per cent of the whole, and the Khatris about two. The State is almost wholly Hindu, the Mohammadans numbering only about 4,000. Local tradition ascribes the presence of the latter to the invasion of Sikandar Lodhi, who is supposed to have left behind him a colony of Muslims. Some Gujars from the neighbouring tracts have been attracted by the grazing facilities in the State, and have eventually settled here.

It is rather unfortunate that about three fourth of the population of the State has, for a long time, been without any definite status in society. The Kanets and the depressed classes have, of course, been playing their part in the economic exploitation of the country, but their status in the Hindu caste system never allowed them to make their full contribution to the history of the State. The Rajputs from the ruling caste in the State, but their small number has never enabled them to give the State any deep Rajput colouring. They have, of course, imbibed all the virtues and the vices of a ruling class. The Khatris have held high offices in the State, and have been filling most of the minor clerical jobs as well. They form the real official class and as such have wielded an influence quite incommensurate with their numbers. The Brahmans are the spiritual guides of the rulers and the ruled alike; in a State where superstition still reigns supreme, their power and influence may well be imagined.

Thus Mandi has been well endowed by nature. Its physical features make it the home hardy Rajputs. Its climate and physiography make it an excellent place for economic exploitation, its distance from Delhi and other centres of Muslim influence as well as the difficult nature of the country have kept it free from those devastating influences that played havoc elsewhere. Yet its rulers could never play any great part in the history of India at large. The reasons are not far to seek. The very *mountains* which constituted their strength kept the State broken up into small fragments, and thus made the rise of a well organised State difficult. The hills around and about them abounded in other states and rulers, large and small, and it was a job to keep the State together in the hands of the same dynasty in face of their opposition. The rise of the Mughals under Akbar and the

consolidation of the Punjab under Ranjit Singh imposed outside influences on them. Cut off from the rest of the country, hemmed in by their own hills and with a fighting population of Rajputs, it never became possible for its rulers to strike for anything higher than their own independence. The following pages record the attempts made by its rulers to keep the country together under their own control, subjugate neighbouring tracts, and fashion out a working organization of Government. That they have been able to keep the country in their hands for seven long centuries, when elsewhere Kingdoms and States were formed and destroyed, is no small achievement. All honour to them who worked to that end.

CHAPTER II.

CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

AS FROUDE said of Christendom in the middle ages, religion covers every side of a man's activities in Mandi. In every sphere of life his actions are regulated by his religious beliefs, and even a nodding acquaintance with the historical traditions of the country, ancient and mediaeval, would reveal the fact that religion play a very important part in the history of the State. Gods and godesses seem to have taken a peculiarly mundane interest in the fortunes of the ruling dynasty, and are often reported to have guided its footsteps to victory and prosperity! Not content with this numerous deities have often interested themselves in the affairs of less exalted personages as well, and naturally their propitiation supplies the place of medicine and veterinary science! Thus a knowledge of the social customs and religious beliefs of the people becomes a necessary prelude to an understanding of Mandi history.

But in this respect Mandi does not stand alone. All over India—and even Europe, till the end of the middle ages, was no exception—religion has been supposed to cover all the activities of man from the cradle to the funeral pyre. Apart from its personal effect on the individual the political counterpart of this theory lay in the recognition of the State as a theocracy. This recognition could be variously interpreted, but as the Smritis lay down, the Raja is the vicegerent of God on earth. In Mandi the theocratic nature of the state received special emphasis when Raja Suraj Sen, who was without an heir dedicated the State to God Madhav Rao, a form of Vishnu. His successors have thus, always held it in trust for the god and act as his representatives on various occasions. Thus reinforced the position of the Raja has become all the more unassailable. Madhav Rao is the guard-

ian deity of the State and to him all honour is due on all State occasions. He is, as such, the "prince-president" of the numberless gods whom the people of Mandi have chosen to fear, worship and propitiate. This nature of the Hindu pantheon is emphasized when on the Shiv Ratri all the gods and goddesses repair to the capital of the State to do honour to Madhav Rao. They come in state processions, and cannot report their presence to the Raja before they have paid due honour to his principal, Madho Rao. Then the Raja and if he is absent the God himself holds a review of the gods who pass in procession before him. Naturally this 'review' serves to fix the status and paraphernalia of each god. Every god must come in the time-honoured procession, and if any changes have to be affected therein, it is necessary to obtain the Raja's permission. If the shape of the idol is to be changed or the appurtenances of the god are to be increased, then again the Raja's authority has to be sought. Most of the older deities are landlords in their own name, and naturally because for every change in their priests and propitiators the final sanction of the Raja has to be obtained. Equally naturally, the religious festivals are celebrated as state ceremonials, and form well recognised part thereof. The most important among them are Shiv Ratri and Dusehra. The Raja's character of the 'Defender of the Faith' is further emphasized in his jurisdiction over caste. The final power to excommunicate persons of all ranks vests in the Raja, to whom all aggrieved persons repair for redress. If satisfied, he can order the admission of the applicant to his caste. This nature of the Raja's authority further appears as a convenient administrative instrument in the shape of the curse, "*Raja Ki-Darohi*". When an individual is involved in this way to perform a certain deed, he incurs heavy penalties if he fails in such performance. The Raja is thus adequately clothed in a 'divinity that hedges round a king.'

But religion has much wider applications in Mandi. People are generally *Shaktak*,—the worshippers of Shiva's consort known under different names, and propitiate her by animal sacrifices. With it are mixed a curious type of demon lore, serpent worship, and a hundred and one other superstitions. Of local gods the number is legion in Mandi. Almost every village has got its own god or *Sidh*—a spirit inferior in status. Many religious customs and usages survive which have been traced to the curious customs of ancient Himalayan hill tribes. Some scholars have even smelt human sacrifice in them, though so far as the traditional memories of the people go its existence is flatly denied. Every god is worshipped in its idol, and is propitiated through its priest. A resort to their shrines is common on the occasion of every untoward incident in the family; disease, lack of

a son, cattle diseases, monetary troubles, ghostly visitations and the like. The desire to have a son to perform the last rites, *Kirya* and *Shradh*, is so strong that every god is credited with the power—among others—of fulfilling this desire. Of course few live upto their reputation ! The strange ceremonial of *Kaika*—when a priest called *Nar* is called in to take upon himself the evil deeds of the faithful, is supposed to be dead, is paraded round on a bier and gets finally resuscitated—seems to be the nearest approach to human sacrifice and a modern survival thereof. As is natural, the religion of the Brahmans, Rajputs and Khatris is more unmixed with strange customs and ceremonies than those of the lower classes.

Religious zeal is kept up by fasts and festivals. These do not represent any special features except when they get connected with the local gods. The usual Hindu festivals of Shiv Ratri, Dusehra, Holi, Dipmala, and Janam Ashtami are celebrated with a good deal of pomp and show, while minor festivals still receive larger attention than is paid to them in the plains. Besides these there are certain seasonal festivals as well. Of these *Bissu* heralds spring whereas *Sairi* announces the gathering in of the autumn harvest.

Of the local fairs the Baisakhi at Rivalsar—the celebrated floating islands in the lake of that name some twelve miles from Mandi —is the most important. Thousands of pilgrims flock to the place to make their offerings at these islands. The wonderful natural phenomena strikes veneration and awe into the minds of the beholders, and is ascribed as usual, in the Sikandh Purana, to the penances of the Saint Lama. There is not much doubt, however, that the monuments at Rivalsar are Budhist though an image of the Rishi is preserved in a small temple on the bank. The Budhists from Tibet and the surrounding regions come in the month of *Phagan* to pay respect to the shrine of the Budhist saint *Padam Sambhava*. At the time of the solar and lunar eclipses as well, thousands of pilgrims flock to this place.

The Bhut Nath temple was raised when the present city was founded by Raja Ajber Sen. Consequently the god therein enjoys the position of the guardian deity of the city and his shrine is a very popular resort.

Another place of local interest is the temple of *Nawahi Devi* in the village Sangroh on the Hamirpur border. This temple dates

back some two centuries, and was built to do honour to the Devi (Shiva's consort) in her form of a goddess with nine arms. Her temple also was so built as to consist of nine separate shrines. There is besides a tank here. Towards the middle of June a great fair is held at this place every year to which thousands of people from Kullu, Bilaspur and Mandi come to worship at the shrine. A big bazar is also held at which many articles are bought and sold.

Lake *Kumarwah*, some twenty five miles from Mandi, is another place of public resort. Its special interest lies in the fact that all the gold and silver, which is presented at the shrine close by, is thrown into the lake, and thus it is possible that a great treasure may have accumulated therein.

Lake *Porasur*, some twenty miles from Mandi, is associated with the name of Parashar Rishi. There is a temple here dedicated to the Rishi and a great fair is held every year in the middle of June where about 4,000 people gather together from the neighbouring villages. This lake also contains some floating islands which increase its importance in the eyes of the people.

Another fair is held in September in the village *Chhatri* where a large number of pilgrims congregate from Kullu, Mandi and Suket. In the temple here reposes an idol of Mahadev. The temple is a beautiful piece of architecture according to Mandi standards.

The religion rites and ceremonies connected with individuals do not differ much from those usually practised among the Hindus. Here and there, of course, quaint customs survive which have disappeared elsewhere; occasionally they receive a local touch which increases their picturesqueness. The most important ceremonies include hair-cutting, the sacred thread-investiture—in the case of Brahmans, Rajputs, and Khatris—, marriage and death ceremonies. As elsewhere hair-cutting is sometimes performed at the shrine of some local god or goddess, and Rivalsar occupies a prominent place in this connection, whereas Jawalamukhi, not far in the Kangra District, also claims many votaries. Children of many prayers, of course, have this ceremony performed at the shrine of the god whose intercession is believed to have gladdened the mother's heart. The sacred thread ceremony does not offer any peculiarities except that certain castes are invested with the thread at the time of the marriage or when visiting some sacred place. This seems to be a reminder of the times when those castes, Kanets and goldsmiths for example, had the right to the

sacred thread the use of which has now been confined to certain particular occasions only.

Marriage presents its own problems in Mandi. Of course among the higher castes its celebration does not differ much from what it is in the plains. But certain peculiar customs, which prevail among the Kanets and others, have made Mandi the marriage market for the neighbouring plains as well as for Kangra. The system of marriage by purchase is the commonest of all, and as the outsiders are able to pay higher prices, some local difficulties are being experienced in this connection. Worse still a husband has the right of palming off his wife on whomsoever would be prepared to pay a decent sum. Widow remarriage in the family of the husband is also common. When a husband sells his wife he has to pay ten per cent of the sale money to the State. Thus usually a woman of age is never without a partner, and ordinarily she may pass through several hands in her life. Naturally the standard of sexual morality is not very high. Among some of the higher hill tribes polyandry still exists though it is fast disappearing under modern conditions. Polygamy is met with mostly among Rajputs who sometimes still keep up the mediaeval custom of a harem by having regular recognised mistresses from the lower castes.

The people are very ignorant and consequently very credulous and superstitious. All manners and kinds of superstitions, which have by this time died a natural death elsewhere, stalk the countryside in their nakedness. There is no limit to a hill man's credulity. He believes in ghosts and supernatural visitations, witches ply a flourishing trade in his midst, magic intervenes in most of his misfortunes, omens surround him on all side; 'dreams cast the shadow of coming events before them' whereas he cannot put his hand to any work without consulting the astrologer. Thus it is an altogether superstition—ridden life that he leads. He will not connect natural causes with their effects, and would rather consult a 'diviner' than a physician when he is ill. If his cattle suffer, some witch must be found who has cast her magic over them. His gods are so many that some one among them goes unpropitiated and naturally trouble ensues! And as almost every village has a god he has leisure enough to interest himself in the affairs of his parishioners!

Such are the people whose history we are about to relate!

CHAPTER III.

EARLY HISTORY.

WHEN the gods fashioned Mandi, they forgot to appoint an historian! Whatever be the cause, the early annals of the State are very poor and fragmentary. Mandi emerged as a separate State in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and our knowledge of its earlier history is mainly derived from Bansavalis and the local tradition. It was too far sheltered in the hills to come into the ken of the Muslim chroniclers, and the State was as yet too small in area to merit the successful attention of some bard. The city itself was founded in about 1527, and all that can be hoped for, before that date, are references to the smaller localities. But these localities in their turn where rather too small and the possessors thereof too many to have made any impression on outside chroniclers. The only place that has some chance of an early mention in literature is Rawalsar and we find it mentioned in the Puranas as a sacred place of pilgrimage.* Local tradition further associates two places in the State with the Mahabharta. Karnpur, a small village is said to have been founded by Karan a hero of the Mahabharta. A temple at Guma points to the locality where the Pandawas sheltered themselves when the attempt to burn them down failed†. Beyond this not much trace of the state's existence can be found in classical literature.

Of course, the history of the state, as of every other country, begins when man first emerged upon the earth and chose Mandi to be his habitation.

But of those far off time not a trace remains, not a memory lingers. Even when elsewhere those dark recesses of time begin to get illumined here and there by the flood light of history, Mandi still remains in the dark. The reigning family claims descent from the lunar line of epic Kashatryas, and the geneologies preserved in the State speak of some 161 rulers, since the battle of the Mahabharta, be-

*Skanda Purana.

†There are two images in the temple, one represents *Haramba*, the other stands for *Ghatot Kach*, the wife and son of Bhima respectively.

fore Vir Sen, the progenitor of the local dynasty, moved on to settle in the Punjab hills. But of the history of the State, apart from that of the reigning dynasty, not much is heard, and there is not enough even to fire the imagination.

Vigne connected the Sikandar range with the invasion of Alexander the Great. But there is now no doubt that he was rather rash in his judgment. We know nothing about the history of the State when the Greek invasion came and our knowledge of it during the Muryan times is equally fragmentary. There is reason to believe, however, that under the Muryas, Mandi formed a part of the extensive Muryan Empire. When the Muryan Empire broke up, it is difficult to guess what actually happened in this part of the country. Of course soon after came the Graeco-Bactrian and the Parthian invasions of the Punjab, and Mandi might have formed a part of these foreign kingdoms. But it is doubtful if any outside invader could have leisure enough to undertake the difficult task of subduing these mountainous tracts. It may have been Kanishka who converted its people to Bhudhism, but the Chinese pilgrims know nothing of this small country and exhibit no knowledge of that sacred place of Budhist pilgrimage, Riwalsar. They were fired with such a zeal for their religion that whatever the difficulties of their way they would have visited Riwalsar if it had by that time developed into a sacred place. They had tackled stiffer jobs for their religion!

Tibetan tradition, however, now comes to our help—*Padam Sambhav* (750-800 A.D.) the great Budhist patriach, who was summoned by king Tisong-De-Tsen of Tibet,* and is credited with the introduction of Budhism in Tibet hails from Zahor. Almost all scholars are agreed that Zahor represents the country round about Riwalsar if not the whole of the Mandi tract. Thus Mandi must have been a great home of Budhist learning about this time. That it continued to be so for some time more is further proved by the fact that, when king Langdharma (C. 900 A.D.) of Tibet began to persecute the Budhists there and they found it necessary to carry away their books to a safer place, some of them crossed back to Mandi and deposited their religious lore somewhere in the State, Mandi thus provided a safe home not only for the persecuted Budhists, but for their religious books as well. It would be difficult to hazard a guess about the religion of the people in Mandi at that time, but the story about Riwalsar which we find in the Sakanda Purana suggests that Brahmanism might have re-asserted itself at the most by the end of the 6th century, and there is nothing curious in

*Tibet, Past and Present, by Bell, p. 26.

the persecuted Budhists taking refuge in a Brahmanical land. India has always provided refuge to the persecuted.

Then came the Muslim invasion of India. Mahmud overran the country, but he was in too great a hurry to think of crossing over to this side of the Beas. Albaruni preserves a faithful account of the Hindu India of his times, but even he fails to mention Riwalsar or give us any information about the people thereof. Ghoris and the Slaves followed Mahmud, but they also failed to penetrate into the isolated shelter in which the hill States lay lodged.

Thus we grope in the dark through the first period of its history. No very definite information is available to enable the historian to reconstruct the history of the country during all this period, and the only definite event about which we can be certain is the emergence of Riwalsar as a place first of Hindu and then of Budhist pilgrimage.

The second period of Mandi history begins with the appearance of Bir Sen, the progenitor of the present reigning dynasty in Suket. Tradition has it that he was the grandson or the great-grandson of the last Hindu ruler of Bihar. Lakshman Sen, the founder of Lakhnauti.* When Bakhtiar Khilji attacked the country in 1189-99, Lakshman Sen, who had been told by his astrologers that he could not succeed against the Turk invaders,† fled from his capital Nadia towards Dacca and settled at Bikrampur.‡ His son Madho Sen (or Damodar Sen according to another genealogy) succeeded him here and was succeeded in his own turn by Sur Sen.§ His son Rup Sen was expelled from Bikrampur and after a series of adventures reached eastern Punjab, where he settled at Rupar in Ambala District and gave to the place his own name. The Mohammadans,¶ however did not leave him alone there as well and he fell fighting against his persecutors in 1210. His three sons then fled to the hills and one of them Vir Sen founded a principality at Suket** and his descendants still bear sway in Mandi as well as Suket.

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*He reigned from 1112 to 1199.

†Tabkat-i-Nasri in Elliot, Volume II, page 308.

‡Eight miles south east of Dacca.

§Cambridge History of India, Volume III, page 47.

¶Imperial Gazetter Volume XXI, page 339.

**The State of Keonthal in the Simla hills is said to have been founded by Giri Sen or Tan Sen another son of Rup Sen, J.P.H.S. Volume IV No. 1 34, Simla Hill State Gazetteer (Keonthal p. 5, Kish. war in Kashmir is associated with Hamir Sen (c.f. however J.P.H.S, IV, 34),

RAJA CHATAR SEN OF MANDI.

Cunningham, however, was not prepared to accept this story. He antedated the foundation of the State by more than four centuries*: His reasoning was ingenious. He based his argument mainly on his reading of the *Nirmand* inscription, and the probable number of years that passed between Ajbar Sen, whose date we know from *Madhusudhan* copper plate grant, and Samudar Sen. Now his reading of the *Nirmand* inscription in Kullu is open to grave doubt, and we are rather disposed to agree with Fleet,† who held that it is impossible to read into the Samudar Sen of this inscription the ruler of that name in Mandi. He further contested Cunningham's reading of the date in the inscription and ascribes it to the 7th century A.D. Thus the main plank of Cunningham's theory falls to the ground. His insistence on a period of 30 years for every reign between Samudar Sen and Ajbar Sen outdoes even the geneologists in their generosity. The Vanshavali records two hundred and eighty-one years to the credit of all the twelve Rajas from Samudar Sen to Ajbar Sen, whereas Cunningham's calculation would assign 360 years. Cunningham's generous concession does not hold good even when we consider the later reigns. From Ajbar Sen to Bhawani Sen 16 rulers held sway in Mandi, and the average length of their reigns comes to 23 years. If we accept the year 1210 as the date of the foundation, we have 41 rulers to account for 701 years giving an average of 17.5 years to each reign. Now this is by no means too low a figure as compared with the average of 23 years for the last 16 known rulers. We have got to remember in this connection that the first half of Mandi history must have been a period of great turmoil, and so it is not to be wondered at that the earlier period gives us a somewhat lower figure.

Dr. Hutchinson fished out other contributory evidence as well to fit in with Cunningham's theory of the foundation of the State in the eighth century.‡ Some of this evidence would not bear careful examination. The Chamba annals record the tradition that when towards the end of the eigth century, *Kiras* invaded Chamba, Raja *Lakshmi Verma* was killed in battle, and his Rani who was pregnant found refuge, after the birth of her son, with Parbog, the then Raja of Suket.

Her son Mushan Verma was married to a daughter of the Suket Prince and given in dowry a Jagir in Pangna.§ Now this does not

*Archaeological Survey of India, Volume XIV, page 121.
†Corpus Inscription Indicorn, Volume III, page 281—291.
‡J.P.H.S. VII, page 4 and III, page 45.
§Chamba Gazetteer, History by Dr. Hutchinson, page 72.

prove that Suket was being ruled by the present ruling family. In fact the name of Raja Parbog distinctly goes against the Suketri tradition of names ending in Sen. Thus it seems fairly clear that he must have belonged to some earlier dynasty. Another couplet from Bilaspur annals has also been put forward to establish the antiquity of the State, but the couplet referred to speaks of the conquests of a Raja Bir Chand of Bilaspur (C. 743 A.D.) who is credited with having made an advance against Keonthal. Now it would be preposterous to suggest that Keonthal itself did not exist before a principality was founded here by Giri Sen, Vir Sen's brother; and this couplet again does not even suggest that Keonthal was at that time in the hands of its present rulers. Again the invasion of Kullu in the times of Bhupal, whose date we do not know, by a Raja of Suket does not show as Messrs. Cunningham, Vogel, and Hutchinson would have us believe* that it was undertaken by a Raja belonging to the present dynasty.

We are further told that Raja Mahi Parkash of Sarmur's (1108-1117) demanding the daughter of Raja Rup Chand of Keonthal in marriage,† proves that the State of Keonthal had by this time been formed. Here again we have got to remember that the name Rup Chand does not agree with the Suketri tradition wherein the Raja takes the suffix Sen. We see, therefore, no reason to disbelieve the tradition that the present ruling dynasty of Mandi first came over to Suket in the beginning of the thirteenth century. If any thing the tradition is apt to antedate such events in order to assert the antiquity of the dynasties it deals with and it would be absurd to suggest taking it farther back. This much, however, may be admitted with Cunningham and Hutchinson that when Vir Sen came over to Suket and settled there, he did not found a new principality, but probably dislodged some old ruling dynasty and established his own power.

When Bir Sen crossed over to the hills, the country was being governed by local chiefs called Ranas and Thakars. Five States had, however, been already formed: Sirmur, Kullu, Bilaspur and Suket; and there is reason to believe that Keonthal also had been organised into a petty chieftainship.‡ Under these chiefs, however, there were

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*Suket State Gazetteer, page 13.

†Sirmur State Gazetteer, page 10 Note. This demand was resisted, but in the end Rup Chand was defeated and probably slain and one of his daughters was married to Mahi Parkash.

‡Raja Mahi Parkash of Sirmur (1108—1117) had demanded the daughter of Raja Rup Chand of Keonthal in marriage (Sirmur Gazetteer page 9 and page 10 footnote.

innumerable Ranas and Thakars who were the real rulers of the small principalities, and who were subordinate to the Rajas to the extent of paying a tribute only. It is difficult to say definitely who these Ranas and Thakars were, but judging from their descendants of to-day it is fairly safe to assert that the Ranas were probably Rajputs whereas the Thakars belonged to the Kanet tribe.* Bir Sen must have been accompanied by a band of adventurous Rajputs. His brother Giri Sen was also there. Bir Sen undertook the task of subduing the local Ranas and Thakars, and as most of them had feuds with their neighbours and overlords he had his chance. He was able to establish his authority in most of what is now Suket, probably by expelling the reigning dynasty, and built a palace at *Pangna* now in the Sarbi ilaqa. This became his capital. The territories he had thus conquered probably acknowledged the overlordship of the Raja of Kullu with whom he had to fight next. He was victorious and thus his conquests were now consolidated. Bir Sen was followed by six more rulers to whom must be ascribed some of the conquests which are usually credited to his account. Then came Sahu Sen. Mandi tradition has it that he was rather eccentric and inclined to be a misanthrope. He would not come to the court and to antagonize his courtiers, he placed his shoes on a *Chauki* in the Darbar and asked his subjects to salute it. His courtiers naturally did not take it very kindly, and an intrigue was started with the purpose of supplanting him by his younger brother Bahu Sen. The plot was discovered but Bahu Sen retired to his own Jagir and there made himself master of the territory round about Manglaur in Kullu. His first capital was at Hat (now Hatgarh about ten miles south from Mandi); but later on he moved to Manglaur. After his death nine more rulers: (Niru Sen, Naroahan Sen, Kanwahan Sen, Suraher Sen. Bir Sen, Samudar Sen, Keshab Sen, Mangal Sen, Jai Sen) followed. Not much is known about them. Kanwahan Sen is said to have been a very truthful chief whereas Sabahu Sen was notorious for his cruelty. Mangal Sen had an uncanny reputation. He would like to get served at his tables fresh meat of animals killed by his own huntsmen. Once it was raining hard and the huntsmen were not able to get anything. He would, however, hear no excuses and sent them out again in that heavy rain. They played a dirty trick on him and had human flesh, cut off from a corpse, served up. He is said to have liked the taste and then discovered what it was! Now religious superstition intervened and he at once decided on taking human flesh for 101 days so that he might

*Cunningham identifies the Kanets with the Kunindas of early Hindu history and traces them back to the third century B.C. He even goes further and finds the Kanets (or Kulindas) in the Mahabharata. Kanets are supposed to be a mixed race. Cf. H.S.J.R. Volume XIV, page 129.

aspire to the position of an *Abhdut*. For some days the practice continued, a victim being chosen somehow. The people, however, got infuriated and at last played another trick upon him to end his nefarious career. He was walking in the forest when a man previously instructed and sitting concealed on a tree, dropped the chir fruit at his head. Now this was how his victims used to be selected and when he was hit by that fruit, his courtiers at once seized his person and did him to death. Tenth in descent from Bahu Sen was Karanchan Sen who seems to have been very ambitious. The earlier chiefs had been mere Ranas, rulers of their possessions under a superior overlord, probably the Raja of Kullu. Kadanchan Sen, however, would not be satisfied with anything so prosaic and he determined to enlarge his principality as well as throw off the yoke of the Raja of Kullu. He attacked the Rana of Panjain, and defeated and killed him in battle. Thujri and Kao were, thereupon, annexed. Then followed an attack on the neighbouring Ranas of Bagi Thach, Neru and Bans. They were defeated and consented to pay tribute. They appealed, however, to their overlord, the Raja of Kullu who at once organized an expedition for their relief as well as for the subjugation of his unruly leigeman. Karanchan Sen was defeated and killed in battle. His Rani was pregnant and when Manglaur had been burnt down she fled in the disguise of a Brahmin woman, to her father, the Rana of Sheo Kot. Before she could reach that place of safety, however, she lost herself in the forest and when completely exhausted took shelter under an oak (*ban*) tree. There she gave birth to a son. When the morning came she was seen by some persons belonging to her father's retinue. They took her home to the Rana who was childless. He adopted her son who was named Ban after the tree under which he was discovered. The Rana had him well brought up and Ban Sen became a brave young man well exercised in the use of arms. At the death of the Rana, Ban Sen succeeded him. His accession, however, seems to have been opposed by the late Rana's Minister Bisht who probably had another more pliant candidate up his sleeves. Ban Sen killed him and then settled down to a long reign of over forty years. He aggrandized himself at the expense of his neighbours. He attacked the Rana of Sagar, and defeated him in battle wherein all the members of the reigning family fell. But an infant was saved and was reared up by a Brahmin family. When he came of age, Rana Ban Sen discovered his whereabout, had him brought to the court, but pardoned him and gave him the nickname *Bhagyar* (the runaway). Sagur, however, had become a part of Ban Sen's territory. He attacked the Rana of Kalti and defeated him as well. He shifted his capital from Sheo to Bhiuli, two miles from the present town of Mandi. He now wanted to subdue the Ranas of Shaval,

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Pandoh, Arkli, Khokhan and Dodha. All these places lay on the other bank of the river Beas, and it was a tedious problem to cross over and subjugate them. Some *Botis* who recognised Ban Sen as their chief lived on the other side of the river as well. When the two armies lay facing each other across the river, these Botis played a trick. The allied armies of the Ranas had been so much overawed that they remained always under arms and except at meal time. One day these Botis began to cook their meals and while the allied armies laid down their arms, the Botis raised so much smoke that under its cover Ban Sen's army advanced and took their opponents unawares. They were defeated and their territories were annexed. Ban Sen gave these Botis the title of *Lodmar* in recognition of their services in this connection.

Ban Sen also built the famous Prasar temple in the Prasar lake some 20 miles from Mandi. The floating islands here soon made the temple a popular place and even now a large number of people flock here at the time of the annual fair in June. After reigning for some 45 years Ban Sen died in about 1346 A.D.

He was followed by his son Kalyan Sen who bought Old Mandi, and made it his capital which it continued to be for about a century and a half. Ban Sen's additions to his territory had made the position of his descendants stronger. Kalyan Sen also did his part by subduing the chiefs of Kelti, Chahti, Samur and Sagrur. The last two places were annexed. Kalyan Sen was not, however, a great warrior though tradition knows him as a generous chief. He is said to have ruled for about 41 years.

His son Hira Sen succeeded him. The bards sing of him as a great conqueror though all that he added to his territories was Kanhwal. He fought against the Rana of Gandharb and was killed in battle in 1405 A.D. He was succeeded by his younger brother Dhratri Sen who died without a son and was succeeded by his uncle Narendar Sen in 1425. Harjai Sen and Dilawar Sen followed. It was in the reign of the latter that Sikandar Lodhi attacked Mandi and gave his name to the mountain range which is still called after him. Details about his invasions are not available. He came by the Una Mandi road and is said to have crossed into Mandi near Sakandra. His expedition threw the country into disorder and its inhabitants fled for refuge to mountain fortresses. He left the country soon after, but his garrison remained in the hills for about nine years. Some of their descendants are still living in the State as Pathans.

Dilawar Sen's death in 1499 and Ajbar Sen's succession closed another period in the history of the country. From Bahu Sen to Ajbar Sen, the rulers must be regarded as local chiefs, and we cannot yet give them the coveted title of the Raja. Like other Ranas and Thakars they were always at war with their neighbours; but the fortunes of war seem to have favoured them so far. Their ambitious and warlike spirit had by now won for them a large territory, but it was left to Ajbar Sen to take that title and claim supremacy over local chiefs and equality with his contemporary Rajas of Kullu, Suket, Sirmour and Kangra.

Ajbar Sen's accession in 1499 begins the modern period of Mandi history. Old Mandi which was the capital till now was abandoned, and the site of the present Capital was acquired, after a stubborn fight, from Rana Gokal of Salhiana to whom it belonged. Here he built the present capital of the State, and it came to be called Mandi, a name which had at first been used to denote the old capital Bathauli. The earliest mention of this name occurs in the Tirlok Nath temple inscription dated 1442 of the Saka era equivalent to about 1520 A.D. This is in old Mandi. It is clear, therefore, that the name had come into vogue before the present town was founded. Various guesses have been offered to explain the name! Messrs. Vogel & Huchinson have interpreted it as 'market' and connected it with the Ladakh trade which passes on to Hoshiarpur through Mandi. Unfortunately this trade does not stop at Mandi to make it a market town: The inhabitants connect it, as usual, with the name of a Rishi. Mandap in this case who performed long and severe austerities here and who has been commemorated in the name of the city. This postulates an antiquity for the town which it does not, in any case deserve.

Ajbar Sen built a palace here and adorned it with four towers. He also built the temple of Bhut Nath and his Rani constructed that of Tirlok Nath.

But Ajbar Sen's time was not wholly spent in demonstrating his religious zeal. Rana Gokal of Salhiana had already been killed when Mandi was acquired and his territories were annexed. Ajbar Sen, however, was not content with this; he wanted to assert his supermacy over all the neighbouring chiefs and subjugate them. The next to suffer were the Ranas of Kanhwal and Gandharb. Kanhwal had been subdued and annexed by Hira Sen, but it had apparently revolted and became independent sometime afterwards. A Rana of Gandharb had been responsible for the death of Hira Sen. All these things united to inflame Ajbar Sen's mind against these turbu-

lent chiefs. Now they gathered their forces together and collected some 1,300 soldiers out of whom 700 were archers. The opposing armies met at Balh when the allies were defeated and fled. Ajbar Sen gave pursuit and the Rana of Gandharb was killed. Ajbar Sen's son Chatar Sen then attacked Rana Achab of Maratu. The fortunes of war, however, went against him and he was wounded and defeated. The memory of this battle has been enshrined in the Madhu Sudan copper plate inscription. This is a grant signed by Chatar Sen, but made by Ajbar Sen to Madhu Sudan one of the four Khatri brothers who had accompanied Chatar Sen in his ill-starred expedition. Of the four, three were killed in battle, and the fourth was given some lands in the newly acquired territory. Raja Ajbar Sen also conquered Kamlah and Kalar and made them a part of his territories.

He was ably assisted in all his work by his Minister Bisht. He ruled for 35 years and died in 1534.

Ajbar Sen was the first great ruler of Mandi. He was probably the first to assume the designation of Raja; he consolidated the territories that he had inherited and added to them new ones that he wrested from the hands of his neighbours. He gave to his successors their Capital and bequeathed to his subjects the great temples of Bhut Nath and Trilok Nath.

Ajbar Sen's son Chatar Sen seems to have died in the lifetime of his father. Most of the Bansavalis do not speak of him as a reigning Raja. But Cunningham assigned a barren reign of 20 years to his credit. The facts of the case, however, do not warrant any such assumption. Ajbar Sen's successor was his grandson Sahib Sen who ruled for 26 years from 1534 to 1560. His Rani Prakash Devi, daughter of the Raja of Bilaspur, exerted great influence on him. The Rana of Drang had built a tank at that place, and he was told by his priest to perform its dedication ceremony by a certain day if he wanted to acquire as much territory as he could see from the banks of that tank. But before the appointed day the Parohit took umbrage at some indiscretion of the Rana and hastened to Mandi. Here his story was related to Parkash Devi at whose instigation Sahib Sen attacked Drang, took the place and performed the dedication ceremony of the tank before the appointed time had expired. Thus the salt mines of Drang passed into the possession of the Raja of Mandi. Drang had, sometime before, been captured by Madan Sen, Raja of Suket, but it seems he had allowed the place to remain in the local Rana's possession. This conquest and capture put an end to the claims of Suket to the place, and Drang passed finally into the hands of the Chiefs of Mandi.

This incident led to further conquests by Sahib Sen. He attacked the Ranas of Langot, Nabota, Biarner and Kota and subdued them all. They were now reduced to the position of mere landholders, and their territories were incorporated into the State. Thus was the priest's prophecy fulfilled, and Mandi came to possess all the lands that could be seen from the tank at Drang.

Not content with these conquests, Sahib Sen aimed higher. The Raja of Lag in Kullu had been for sometime defying his leige-lord Partap Singh Raja of Kullu. Finding Sahib Sen so intent upon enlarging his territories Partap Singh proposed to him a conjunction of the forces of Kullu and Mandi with a view to reducing the Raja of Lag to submission. The fruits of the alliance were to be equally shared between the allies. Fortunately for the alliance, the combined forces of Kullu and Mandi were successful and thus Saraj Mandi passed into the hands of Sahib Sen. The Raja, however, still held out and another expedition had to be led, against him. This time again the allies were successful and the division of the spoils gave Sanor and Bedar to Mandi.

While Sahib Sen was thus busy in acquiring territory, his Rani Parkash Devi was busy acquiring religious merit for herself and her house. She built tanks and drinking fountains, laid mule-tracks and gave generously to the Brahmins. Her one desire was to have a son and when at last a son was born to her she named him Narain Sen after the god Narain Dev of Hurang. A gold coin was sent to the temple of the god and is said to be still there.

It was during Sahib Sen's reign that the empire of India again passed into the hands of the Mughals. When Humayun died, Akbar, was chasing Sikandar Sur in the Kangra hills. The pursuit was continued for some time after Akbar's accession until Sikandar Sur surrendered. It is possible that during the course of the military operations against Sikandar Mandi may also have subjugated. An annual tribute was all that was required, and it was fixed at the nominal figure of Rs. 500/-. The poverty of the hill Rajas was proverbial and saved them from large exactions. As in the case of other Rajas, the chiefs of Mandi had to maintain a Vakil at the court of the Emperor, and another at that of the district Faujdar at Kangra. Of course, they were also required to dance attendance at the Emperor's Court or send suitable representatives to do it for them. When called upon they were to furnish the local Faujdar with a contingent force for local service. They were liable to service abroad, but the military capacity of the hill chiefs in Kangra was not much valued for service in the country at large, and naturally we do not find any Raja of Mandi conspicuously mentioned in the Persian chronicles. Strangely enough

RAJA KESAB SEN OF MANDI.
1574 TO 1604.

not a single chief of Mandi ever rose to obtain a large enough *Mansab* to obtain an honourable mention in the chronicles in that biographical dictionary of Moghul Mansubdars Maasar-ul-Umra.

The Mughal supermacy was felt most at the time of succession. Submission to imperial power reduced the Raja to the position of hereditary mansabdars. Naturally when a Raja died his successor had to obtain an imperial *farman* recognizing him as the raja and conferring upon him a mansab commensurate with the revenue of the district he governed. The usual custom was to send first a *farman* erpressing condolence on the death of the late chief accompanied by a Khillat. This was followed by an investiture *farman* and Khillat. Ceremonies of succession were performed locally in the customary way by the family Prohit. Obviously the imperial farman and the Khillat would attain exceptional significance in the case of a contested succession; but as there are no such cases on record in Mandi, the imperial insignia never obtained that importance here which they gained elsewhere.

Raja Sahib Sen died in 1554 after a reign of about 20 years.

He was succeeded by his son Narain Sen, a child of many prayers. His patron gods had, however, not been very kind to him in so far as his physical appearance was concerned. He was born a cripple. An ascetic Chuni Muni had once visited Mandi and Narain Sen's mother had approached that ascetic so that her boy might get well. The ascetic's treatment wrought a miracle, and Narain Sen was soon able to shake off his infirmities. This event was, until recently, commemorated in 3 seers of grain which every hamlet in the State paid to the ascetic's disciples. In the recent land-settlement, however, this payment was declared voluntary, and like the Irish title in such a condition it is not likely to last very long. Narain Sen continued the good work that his father had begun. He led his armies against many local chieftains important among whom were the Ranas of Ner, Pandol Chuhar, Anant Pur and Tahal. As the result of these expeditions some territory was gained, seven *garhs* (forts with surrounding territory) from Chuhar and five from Pandoh were now added to the territories which the Rajas governed themselves. He next turned his attention to Suket. The proximity of the two States was productive of constant quarrels, and Narain Sen undertook to settle the boundary of the two States definitely. In this attempt he conquered a large portion of Suket from Udai Sen (1560-1590), and fixed the boundary of the State at the towns of Balh and Loharu. This gave Mandi much more territory than it possesses even today. Narain Sen died of paralysis in (about) 1574.

His younger brother Keshab Sen succeeded him and ruled for 30 years (i.e. till 1604). Not much is known about him. His only memorial for posterity is his Barsela or the death-monument which his successor raised in his honour.

His son Hari Sen succeeded him at his death in 1604, and ruled till 1637. In his reign the Mughal hold on Mandi was tightened when in 1618 Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur was appointed Faujdar of Kangra. He retained that position for many years, and seems to have been transferred from this command in 1635 by Shah Jehan. Jagat Singh wanted to assert the Mughal supermacy over the hill chiefs and thus increase his own power and influence. He attacked Chamba in about 1623, and assassinated the regent Crown-Prince Janardhan. His son Prithwi Singh, next in succession, took refuge in Mandi, and remained there till 1642 when Raj Rup, Jagat Singh's son, who was then acting as the Faujdar of Kangra rebelled. Prithwi Singh thereupon marched on Chamba with the help of the Raja of Mandi. But before this event Hari Sen died in 1637. He is the first ruler whose date of death we definitely know as it is inscribed on his Barsela monument to be still found intact in Mandi on the left bank of the *Suketi Khud.*

CHAPTER IV.

RAJA SURAJ SEN, 1637 TO 1664 A.D.

With the accession of Raja Suraj Sen to the *Gaddi* we tread on firmer ground historically. Our facts and dates become comparatively surer, and the veil of mystery, which more or less enshrouds the reigns of his predecessors, begins gradually to fall away.

Suraj Sen was a minor when, by his father's death, he found himself the ruler of his people. During his minority the administration was carried on by one Kroria Khattri, who seems to have been a fairly capable official. He was, however, anxious to retain power in his own hands as long as possible. The scheming Kroria, however, soon found that if he was ambitious, his young master was more ambitious still, and was beginning to chafe under the tutelage of his Minister. The latter now began to intrigue with Raja Jagat Singh Pathanian of Nurpur, who had somehow acquired considerable influence at the Moghul Court. He was appointed the Faujdar of Kangra by Shah Jahan in 1640, but held that post for about two years only. As Faujdar of Kangra he became the immediate Moghul officer of all the hill states in Kangra. He was, however, still more ambitious. He, therefore, welcomed the wicked proposal of Kroria that Suraj Sen should be offered the hand of Jagat Singh's daughter in marriage, and that when the bridegroom went to Nurpur to wed the Princess, he should be detained there or perhaps got rid of. This was calculated to serve the sinister purpose of Kroria as well as of Jagat Singh. The former would be able to prolong, by some years, his unscrupulous career as Minister in charge of the administration, and the latter would have the satisfaction of having a brother prince under his thumb; or in the event of Suraj Sen's assassination, Mandi would be conquered and annexed to Nurpur territory. This treacherous scheme succeeded up to a point. Suraj Sen went to Nurpur, and some of the marriage ceremonies were duly performed; but just before the final scene of the perfidious drama was about to be enacted—the tender conscience of Jagat Singh's Rani secretly betrayed his plans to the young bride-groom. Thus apprized of his danger, Suraj Sen thought discretion the better part of valour and unceremoniously leaving his bride to the paternal care of his father-in-law he made good his escape from Nurpur.

Kroria was now completely unmasked, and his disloyalty to his master was duly punished. He and the other members of his family were arrested and after heavy millstones had been tied to their bodies they were thrown into the river to be feasted upon by the fish. Only one woman, who was pregnant, was spared out of the whole family of Kroria, and her descendants are still living in Mandi, and are known as Kahiana Khattris.

After some time Jagat Singh and Suraj Sen were reconciled to each other, and the bride arrived at Mandi in charge of her brother Raj Rup who was well received by the Raja.

In 1641 Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur was complained against to the Emperor but when called upon to present himself at the court, he rebelled. Man Singh of Guler was appointed to chastise him, and in the battle that followed at Rani Tal, Jagat Singh was defeated. Suraj Sen seems to have been an unwilling alley of Jagat Singh and on his defeat he left the field and fled to Mandi. One Naryal Lala,—who belonged to Mandi, but having been driven out by Kroria, had taken up service under the Raja of Nurpur,—saw the sorry plight of the ruler of his land of birth, and loyally came forward and offered to take Raja Suraj Sen safely to Mandi. Meanwhile, the false news had somehow reached Mandi that the Raja had been killed in the battle of Rani Tal. The Rani prepared to immolate herself as Sati; but just in time Raja Suraj Sen sent Naryal Lala with his signet-ring post-haste to Mandi to inform his subjects and his Rani that he was alive and on his way home. Saved from the cruel fires of the Sati the Rani welcomed the presentation of her lord's signet-ring with the greatest joy, and declaring the Lala as her *dharam putra* said, that he was like Hanuman who had taken Shri Ram Chandra's ring to Sita when she was detained by Ravan in Lanka.

On Raja Suraj Sen's way to Mandi there occurred a very interesting and touching incident. Somewhere near Chuhar, he met an old woman who began to cry as soon as she saw him. Asked why she was weeping she replied, "Your face resembles that of our dear dead Raja whose *darshana* it used to be our privilege to have at Mandi at the Shivratri Fair". Suraj Sen told her that he was the Raja and that he had not been killed as reported. The old woman would not believe him, and insisted on his taking off his shirt so that she might identify him by seeing two congenital marks on his back about which her son, a personal servant of the Raja, had told her. Thus reassured the old woman informed the inhabitants of Chuhar who were all overjoyed, and in their own primitive but hearty fashion gave their ruler a very warm welcome, and many of them escorted him to the

Raja Hari Sen of Mandi.
1604 to 1637.

capital. There were great rejoicings among the townsmen when the Raja reached Mandi, and in reward for this manifestation of their loyal feelings these people were permanently absolved from the performance of *begar*.

WARS WITH THE RAJA OF KULLU.

Raja Suraj Sen was a brave and daring soldier with a keen zest for adventure; but he was very ambitious, and wished his name to be handed down to posterity as a great conqueror. It was in the pursuit of this aim that he attacked the Rana of Bhangal who sought the assistance of his brother-in-law, Raja Jagat Singh of Kullu. The combined forces defeated the Raja of Mandi, and the fortresses of Shahpur, Karanpur and Shamsherpur were captured by the Raja of Kullu who, as the price of his assistance made his brother-in-law hand over to him Dewal, Sansal and Ber.

Thus foiled in his very first attempt at conquest, and smarting under the humiliation of defeat, Suraj Sen made fresh preparations for invading Kullu not only with a view to acquiring some territory there, but also to punish the Raja of Kullu for making common cause with the Raja of Bhangal in the last war. For a time luck favoured Suraj Sen, and he was successful in capturing Madanpur, Sari and Tarapur. But soon afterwards he suffered severe defeat and was chased out of Kullu. The Kullu army ravaged Mandi territory right up to Gumma and Drang. When the enemy seized these two valuable salt quarries—which even at that time yielded a large revenue Suraj Sen was struck with consternation and sued for peace. He was made to pay an enormous indemnity in return for which the Raja of Kullu agreed to restore to Mandi all the places he had conquered including the much-prized salt quarries.

WAR WITH GULER, 1689 B.

His defeat should have taught Suraj Sen a bitter lesson, but his restless ambition would not let him settle down and he content with his own principality. He made war on Raja Man Singh of Guler, but was again repulsed with great loss. It should be remembered here that Man Singh occupied a high place in the Moghul heirarchy and was known to be one of the bravest hill-chiefs of the time. Man Singh wreaked vengeance by sacking Mandi twice, and setting fire to it. He also seized the District of Kalar in which stood the famous and impregnable fort of Kamlah.

This old fort deserves more than a passing mention. It was probably founded in or about the year 1625, and several weird but interesting stories are related about it. Perhaps the best description of Kamlah fort is that given by Griffin and is reproduced below :—

"Kamlagarh is one of the most celebrated forts in all the hill country. The independence of Mandi has often depended upon the impregnability of its chief fortress. The hill upon which the fortress is situated extends nearly north and south for six or eight miles, running parallel to and about ten miles from the Janetri Devi on the east, and about four miles from the Bakar Khad on the West. The hill is formed of conglomerate sandstone from 150 to 200 feet in height, while the ridge is narrow and serated, and in several places intersected with deep ravines, the eastern and western side presenting an uninterrupted scrap of from 40 to 150 feet along the whole length of the hill, except at the two approaches to the positions of Anantpur and Kamla, which are guarded by forts difficult of access, the ground for several miles round the hill-side being intersected with tremendous ravines which carry off the water either into the Sona or Bakar Khads, thus forming a most difficult country for the transport of artillery, and a most favourable one for defence by a determined body of men."

"The position of Anantpur contains five distinct forts, built in the irregular style usual to these hills, to suit the ground intended to be occupied and protected, viz: Anantpur, Samirpur, Bakhtpur, Partabpur, and Nyakila, the last built by the Sikhs though never completed, besides many smaller out works. Within this position there is abundance of good water in two or three different springs, besides grass and wood. Although on two sides entirely impregnable, and on the third extremely strong, Anantpur is commanded from a hill about 800 yards distant, and could certainly be scaled with ease under cover of guns from the neighbouring hill".

"Kamla contains six distinct forts, viz: Kamla, Choki, Chobarah, Padampur, Shamsherpur, and Narsinghpur; and although like Anantpur, impregnable on two sides and nearly so on the third, where the gateway is reached by a ladder of about forty steps, yet the eastern side might be easily occupied by an enemy if once in possession of Padampur. There is no spring of water in Kamla itself, the spring for the supply of the place being some distance below; but, like all hill forts, it contains excellent tanks, in which suffi-

cient water for the supply of a small garrison for several months might easily be stored".*

The auspicious day for laying the foundation stone of Kamlah fort was determined by the Pandits of Laungani and as a reward they were given a *sasan* (gift of land free of land-revenue) in that village. It is natural that a fort which was considered impregnable, should be used by the rulers of Mandi as a place where everything valuable could be safely deposited.

SUBJUGATION OF THE RANAS OF GUMMA AND NAIR.

Raja Suraj Sen seems to have been more successful in fighting against the minor chiefs—the Ranas of the hills. He easily subdued the Rana of Gumma, but it was only by stratagem that he was able to capture the Rana of Ner. It is said that this petty chieftain defied Raja Suraj Sen for sometime. Unfortunately he used to levy some sort of tax called (*janakar* a grazing-fee) on the *gaddis* (shepherds), and used to count the sheep personally and realize his dues on the spot. On being informed by some spies of this habit of the Rana, Raja Suraj Sen sent a strong detachment to a particular place which his adversary was expected to visit that day. The poor Rana, was taken

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*The Kamlah Fort, which has played such an important part in the history of Mandi, is now in a dilapidated condition. One of the conditions laid down in the Sanad of 1846 was that the Kamlah Fort should be pulled down, so that it is now merely a place of historical interest to which a research student may profitably pay a visit. As if to remind a visitor of its past glory, the Fort is tenanted even now by one Negi (seargeant), 4 sepoys, and 1 Kaith or Munshi who have hardly anything to do except perhaps to sorrowfully ponder over the many stories that are still related about this once impregnable stronghold. Seven years ago when there was a draught some pucca cisterns in the Kamlah Fort were opened up, had were found full of Kodrah and Saunk (cheap grains), and also ghee which had been lying stored there for scores of years. Several hundred maunds of this stuff was sold to the poor people at a nominal price. A large number of old swords, coats of mail, and other weapons; numerous bricks of lead, old clothes etc., were found in the Fort, and some of the articles thrown away, and a few stored in the State Armoury and *Basti Bhandar*. The author has seen the entire collection and some of the articles, although rusted and crumbling away with age, are still very interesting.

In the old days rain water was stored in tanks which served the garrison throughout the year. There is a *Bauri* (a spring of water)—in the Maidan below the Fort and hidden in a sort of cave—which yields very good drinking water.

Every Saturday, particularly in the month of *Har*, offerings are made at the Fort to the accompaniment of music. Some monkeys live near the Fort, and a regular allowance of gram is fixed for them.

It is pathetic to record that even now the castle gates are not opened even to the Raja at night.

completely by surprise, and he was captured and brought before Suraj Sen who instead of chivalrously forgiving a gallant enemy ordered him to be hanged.

PADAMPUR CAPTURED.

Similarly by a rather clever device Raja Suraj Sen succeeded in capturing the fortunes of Padampur. The Rana of Padampur was very fond of hunting, and in the pursuit of game he would forget everything else. A wild hill-goat was caught and lamed, and driven towards Padampur fort. A strong Mandi force, meanwhile, hid itself in some ravines near by. When the Rana saw the lame goat, he went after it, and the fort was left unguarded. Taking advantage of this diversion, the Mandi force rushed out of its place of concealment and without much difficulty occupied the stronghold.

CAPTURE OF PATRI FORT.

In 1653 Suraj Sen captured the fortress of Patri which belonged to Suket. During the first attack it rained very heavily, and the gunpowder was rendered useless, and so no impression could be made on the fort. The second attack was more successful, and although Mian Ram Chand Suketar and Rana Wakat Chand *Nachanwal* came to the rescue of Raja Ram Sen of Suket, the Mandi forces were victorious, and the fort was stormed and occupied.

KOT SULHANI OCCUPIED.

In the same year Raja Suraj Sen succeeded in occupying Kot Sulhani which was gallantly held by Mian Ram Chand. After a desperate resistance the latter fled away leaving the fort to be captured by the enemy.

CAPTURE OF ANANTPUR.

A very interesting story is related about the capture of Anantpur Fort. The Rana was unyielding and the fort strong, and Suraj Sen, although he was very anxious to subdue the proud Rana, found the task extremely difficult. His trusted and faithful Wazir Jalpu advised the use of a stratagem, and offered his own services in the execution of the plan. At his own suggestion he was publicly disgraced by the Raja, his face was blackened, and he was turned out of Mandi. He went to Anantpur, and took up service in the household of the Rana. After a short time he rose to a position of trust and won the confidence and regard of the Rani who honoured him by making him her *dharam-bhai*. One day he told the Rani that he had previously vowed an offering at the shrine of the Naripuri Devi, which

was within the Anantpur fort; and that he wished to bring his family to participate in the intended offering and worship. Should the Rani permit him to offer this Puja, he requested that he might be allowed to bring his women-folk to the shrine in palanquins, and orders might be issued that his whole party should be permitted to enter the fort without let or hinderance and without being beseiged by prying eyes. The unsuspecting Rani readily granted Jalpu's request. He came to Mandi and disclosed his plan to his master. A large number of *palkis* were ordered, and inside each were deposited suitable arms and weapons. The palanquin-bearers—ten for each—were all picked soldiers. As Jalpu had anticipated, the party were allowed to enter the Anantpur fort, and to proceed to the shrine of the Devi. Suspecting no treachery the residents of the fort watched the procession. All at once the ostensibly harmless palanquin-bearers transformed themselves into blood-thirsty soldiers. Before the on-lookers could recover from their surprise, Jalpu led an attack against the vulnerable points, and in the fight that ensued the poor Rana was killed after a large number of his men had been butchered. Jalpu seized the fort; but if such things are to be behived he paid dearly for his treachery. The Rani—his *dharm-bhen*,—performed the rite of Sati; but before the flames enveloped her she cursed Jalpu in the following terrible words: —"Thou hast betrayed thy dharm-sister and for this great crime all thy children and thy children's children shall suffer; they shall be born defective halt, lame, deaf, blind and imbecile". The people of Mandi believe that to a certain extent this curse was duly fulfilled. Needless to say that Jalpu was rewarded liberally by his master for this signal service.

MARRIAGES AND CHILDREN.

Raja Suraj Sen married more than once. His wife from Nurpur brought him Sandhol in her dowry; the Katoch Rani brought *Khanwari*. He also married a daughter of the Rana of Surajpur. There were a few other less noteworthy alliances. Ten Ranis committed *sati* on his death. Raja Suraj Sen had eighteen sons, but unfortunately all of them died in his lifetime. His only daughter was married to Hari Deo of Jammu in 1658. The death of so many sons, and the dread of dying without leaving a son and heir—who would duly perform all the funeral and other ceremonies after death, without which an orthodox Hindu believes no salvation is possible—preyed upon Suraj Sen's mind and affected his health. He consulted astrologers, made offerings to the numerous gods and goddesses of Mandi, performed many a Yajna, but when all these were of no avail, he resolved to hand over his kingdom to Madho Rao, (or the God Vishnu) and during the rest of his life to rule as the vicegerent of the God. With this object he got an image of Madho Rao made in silver

in 1648 and assigned it a Jagir in Tungal in perpetuity. The following is the translation of the Sanskrit text of the inscription which the silver image bears :—

"Surya Sen, lord of the earth, and destroyer of his rivals, had this blameless image of the blessed Discus—bearer, and master (guru) of all the gods, the illustrious Madho Rai, made by Bhima, the goldsmith, in the year 1705, on Thursday, the 15th Phagan".

This silver image is still the object of highest veneration by the Raja and his people, and on important occasion in the Raj family, it is worshipped with due ceremonies. At every important festival Madho Rao is taken out in a picturesque and yet sacred procession followed by the ruler; and all the people of Mandi pay it the respect and homage due to a protecting deity. It is Madho Rao too who gives Raj tilak to every ruler of the Mandi state.

Raja Suraj Sen being a very devout Hindu, had a temple built in honour of Naina Devi near Rawalsar.* A curious story is related about the mason who built this temple. A few years earlier this man had built the Damdama palace in Mandi, and although a modern visitor searches in vain for any great artistic or architectural beauty in the building, Raja Suraj Sen was very proud of it, and after giving a generous reward to the mason he had the latter's right hand cut off so that he might not be able to recreate—what the Raja considered—this wonderful feat of architectural genius. In spite of this disability the mason was able to build the Naina Devi temple much to the wonder of the ignorant and credulous people.

SURAJ SEN'S DEATH, 1664.

During the last few years of his life Raja Suraj Sen never kept good health. He grew hasty, and irritable, and was unable to look after the affairs of the state as well as he had done before.

It seems probable that he developed consumption. His illness was ascribed by some maligners to the black magic of Mian Shyam Singh, the Raja's brother and heir-presumptive, who it was rumoured restored to these sinister practices in order to hasten the end of Suraj Sen, and expedite his own elevation to the throne. Bitterly resenting these monstrous allegations, and getting disgusted with the intrigue—which is usually rampant at the court of a prince when he is believed to be dying—Shyam Singh left Mandi, and went on a

*This temple fell down in the earthquake of 1905.

pilgrimage to Benares and Jagan Nath. When he returned he refused to go to Mandi, but took up his residence in Chamba where his friend Pirthi Singh welcomed him. Realizing that his end was approaching Raja Suraj Sen sent a messenger post-haste to Chamba to ask Shyam Singh to return to Mandi at once if he wished to see the face of his dying brother, and if he did not wish to lose the throne. Shyam Singh hastened to his brother's side, but was probably unable to reach Mandi in time. Suraj Sen passed away on the 15th of Phagan, 1721, (corresponding to 1664 A.D.) after ruling for 27 years.

According to custom all the Ranis prepared themselves for the rite of *sati*. It was usual on such occasions to give away in charity large sums of money, jewels and ornaments. When on their way to the funeral pyre the Ranis sent for these from the treasury it was found to their chargin that immediately after the Raja's death the officials had put all the valuables under lock and key. Disgusted with what they regarded as the infamous conduct of the officials one of the Ranis named Parkash Devi threw her dagger at the wall of the Damdama Palace and uttered the following curse: *"Mandi Kolsara Haramkhor ki Paraul"* ("Mandi will always be in the hands of faithless and disloyal servants"). The visitor to the Damdama Palace is still shown the impress of the dagger on the wall.

Tradition has it that Raja Suraj Sen introduced a fixed revenue assessment, partly in kind and partly in cash; and this is easy to believe when we remember that sometime before the middle of the seventeenth century most if not all of the hill chiefs had acknowledged the suzerainty and supremacy of the Moghuls, and it is possible that the principles of land-revenue assessment then in vogue in the Imperial territory might, in some measure, have been introduced in the states which owed allegiance to the Moghul Emperor.

CHAPTER V.

RAJA SHYAM SEN, 1664—1679.

RAJA GUR SEN, 1679—1684.

RAJA Shyam Sen was indebted to the Mandi officials for his safe and undisturbed accession. He allowed them to carry on the administration while he himself devoted most of his time to music and the pleasures of the harem.

THE FIGHT WITH KULLU.

Within a year of his accession Shyam Sen attacked the territory of the Raja of Kullu and annexed the fortress of Dhanjugarh.

A few months afterwards a civil war in Bilaspur provided an occasion for Mughal interference in the affairs of the State. The Mughal army, probably instigated by the Raja of Kangra, invaded Bilaspur and beseiged Garh Teoni. Its ruler Bhim Chand appealed to Mandi for help.* Raja Shyam Sen sent his forces to the assistance of Bilaspur, and after a great deal of fighting and serious loss of life on both sides the Mughal forces were driven of. In appreciation of the gallant services of those who had lost their lives in this war Raja Shyam Sen gave liberal grants of land to their families. This was an unprecedented act of generosity on the part of Mandi ruler. It is related that the land thus given away was worth five lacs, but this probably is an exaggeration.

THE WAR WITH SUKET.

About this time the feelings of rivalry and animosity between Suket and Mandi came to ahead. For a long time past Suket had been jealous of the increasing power and importance of Mandi

*A sister of Shyam Sen had been married to the Raja of Bilaspur. On the Raja's death, his minor son Bhim Chand succeeded him. This gave an opportunity to some of the local chiefs to contest the succession. Shyam Sen's sister implored him to help her. (Cf. Bilaspur Gazetteer).

and the territorial acquisitions of the latter were always a source of bitter annoyance to the rulers of Suket. In studying the history of these two States one rarely comes across any period during which their relations were at all cordial. Each State was always in search of an opportunity for maligning and humiliating its rival and if possible of taking a slice of its territory. It was always a sort of tug-of-war between the rulers of the two branches of the same princely house, and sometime one and sometime the other had the upper hand. The famous plain of Balh has witnessed many tussels of this sort, and the exploits of both parties are the subject of many a ballad in Mandi and Suket.

By the time of Raja Shyam Sen it was, however, quite apparent that Mandi had left its rival far behind in the race. It was now a case of mere grinding of the teeth in impotent rage on the part of the latter. But in spite of constant mutual bickerings and rivalries there were frequent occasions when the parties came in contact, officially and otherwise, with each other. There was one such occasion which has been immortalized by a Mandi bard.

It is said that the Mandi Vakil took a despatch to Suket protesting against the imposition of octroi duty on the frontier on Mandi produce. When the letter was presented in open court to Raja Jit Sen he poured ridicule over the protest, and gave vent to his spleen by making many insulting remarks against Raja Shyam Sen. He mockingly asked the Vakil "What is Thikar Nath* doing?" This nickname was applied for Shyam Sen† as he was of a dark complexion. Stung by the insult to his master the Vakil deftly retorted "Thikar Nath is red hot and ready for parching gram (that is to say he is ready to cook the goose of his enemies"). This neat and ready-witted rejoinder was too much for the ruler of Suket, and he told the Vakil that his proper punishment was death, but as he was there in the capacity of a representative of another State his life would be spared, but he must leave at once with a blackened face.——"Go and tell your master, that we consider Mandi a mere loin-cloth of Suket and we dare Thikar Nath to do his worst". Smarting under such uncalled for humiliation and disgrace the Vakil carried this insolent message to Mandi. The blood of Shyam Sen boiled at the insult offered to him and he immediately prepared for war. He sent urgent orders to the various waziris to come at once with their forces to the capital.

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*_Thikar_ means a vessel for parching gram
†_Shyam_ means dark-coloured.

took her ashes to Hardwar to be consigned to the sacred waters of the Ganges. He performed all the elaborate rites and ceremonies that are usually performed on such sad occasions at great expense. From Hardwar Gur Sen proceeded to Jagan Nath on a pilgrimage. On his way back to Mandi he halted at Sirmoor for a few days. Raja Bidhi Chand of Sirmoor took a fancy to the handsome young prince and offered him his daughter's hand in marriage. Considering the time inauspicious, as he was returning from a sacred and sad mission at Hardwar—and not having obtained his father's consent to the alliance,—Gur Sen politely refused the offer. He said that as the son of the Raja of Mandi it was not consistent with his position to enter into a matrimonial alliance so suddenly and without the usual pomp and show. Bidhi Chand was greatly disappointed and annoyed; and in his chagrin he put Gur Sen under surveillance. This act was quite unworthy of a princely host, but it led to the fulfilment of his wishes. The Tikka finding himself in such an embrassing position held a consultation with his attendant Sardars and it was agreed that Mandi would be disgraced if the marriage was celebrated without the usual display of riches. This difficulty was solved by one Jokha Khatri who presented 500 gold Mohurs to the Prince to defray the expenses of the wedding; and Gur Sen was duly married and allowed to proceed to Mandi with his bride. Jokha was rewarded for his timely help by being entrusted with the lucrative job of collecting octroi duty.

SECOND WAR WITH KULLU, 1667.

Raja Shyam Sen was pleasure-loving and extremely fond of music. The pursuit of pleasure became a masterful passion during the last four years of his rule, and consequently the work of administration suffered and trouble arose in the distant districts. Bagi Thach, Bans, Naim and Banidhi were one after the other captured by the Raja of Kullu. Shyam Sen spent most of his time in his harem, and it was difficult to inform him about the misgovernment and corruption prevailing in his territory. He was unaware even of his own territorial losses. Taking courage in both his hands one of the loyal servants of Shyam Sen stood near the entrance of the harem, and continued to shout at the top of his voice till the Raja heard him and came out to enquire what the matter was. Being apprized of the deplorable state of affairs Shyam Sen at once shook off his inertia and declared war against Kullu. He led in person a large force against the enemy and after capturing Sanaurgarh and Bajaura he halted at Shamshi within a few miles of Kullu.

A sanguinary battle ensued and the Raja of Kullu finding himself no match for Mandi, capitulated and offered to restore all the captured forts and pay a lakh of rupees as penalty. These terms were accepted by Raja Shyam Sen and he retraced his footsteps to Mandi. He halted in the Kopar Nallah and suddenly feeling a strong craving for his troope of musicians and dancing girls he gave orders that all these should meet him at Kandhi. His Sardars and military officers told him that it was dangerous to go via Kandhi as that route was infested with Kullu soldiery, but the Raja scoffed at their fears, and told them to take the army by the safer route, but he was determined to proceed to Kandhi.

At a lonely place he was attacked by the enemy, and after desperate resistance led by Mian Prem Singh Katoch and Mian Prabh Singh, almost all his attendants were killed and the lakh of rupees, paid by Kullu—seized. Shyam Sen was himself about to be killed when the hand of the assassin was restrained by a Kullu officer who said that it was no use killing the Raja as he had a grown up son who would no doubt wreak terrible vengeance on Kullu if his father was killed. Shyam Sen was placed in a litter and carried by the Kullu men to the place where the Mandi army was stopping en-route to the capital, and delivered to his men with humiliating taunts. This disaster wrecked the already failing health of Shyam Sen and he was dying when Tikka Gur Sen returned from his pilgrimage. Calling upon his son to consider it his sacred duty to punish Kullu for this treachery Shyam Singh died on the 14th of Asauj 1736 Bik: (1679 A.D.).

RAJA GUR SEN 1679—1684.

FOR fifteen days after the death of Raja Shyam Sen there was complete hartal, i.e., all shops were closed and all public business was stopped. After the obsequies of his father had been duly performed Raja Gur Sen took the reins of administration in his own hands. He was a very energetic prince with plenty of governing ability and force of character. He had travelled a good deal—in the limited sense in which travelling was understood in those days—and was as devout as he was brave. He was a skilled and resourceful fighter and a keen sportsman. He was an ardent pilgrim, and on returning from his pilgrimage to Jagan Nath he brought with him the famous image of Jagan Nath and enshrined it in a temple on the beautiful Padal Maidan.* Had it been given to such a prince to rule over his people longer, it is probable that he would have done much for them. As it was even during a brief reign of five years he left his mark on the administration.

GUR SEN IN NEPAL.

In an earlier chapter we have already referred to the fact that when Raja Suraj Sen's health began to fail, his illness was ascribed, by some evil-minded people, to the black-magic of his brother Shyam Sen, and it will be remembered that in bitter annoyance he left Mandi and after a pilgrimage he settled down temporarily in Chamba. Gur Sen had also found life at Mandi as uncomfortable as his father and had gone away to Nepal. He was so popular with the Mandi people that it is said—although it seems to be an exaggeration—that as many as 700 men had left their homes and accompanied him to Nepal. A story is related about Gur Sen rendering a signal service to the Raja of Nepal, and we give it here for what it is worth. A particularly valued stronghold of Nepal had been seized by an enemy and all attempts of the Raja to recapture it had failed. It was at this juncture that Gur Sen appeared on the scene, and when the Raja of Nepal

*It is still there.

heard of the young prince's prowess and gallantry he sent to him for help. Always in search of a noble chance to distinguish himself in battle, Gur Sen readily agreed, and after invoking the aid of his favourite gods and goddesses he took a handful of men and led a determined attack against the enemy. And he succeeded where the mighty host of Nepal had failed. This chivalrous deed won for Gur Sen the deep gratitude and friendship of the ruler of Nepal who covered him with honours. After about three years stay in Nepal, Gur Sen returned to Mandi when he received an urgent call from his dying uncle Raja Suraj Sen.

During his father's rule Gur Sen was his right-hand man, and it seems probable that while Raja Shyam Sen was devoting himself to pleasure the work of administration partly fell on the heir-apparent.

WAR WITH KULLU.

With his last breath Raja Shyam Sen had solemnly adjured his son to avenge the insult and defeat which the Kullu Raja had inflicted upon him by waylaying him while he was returning to Mandi. Gur Sen considered it his foremost duty to carry out the wishes of his father, and after consultation with his Sardars he decided to make war on Kullu. He encamped at Chamar Pani, and sent a challenge to Raja Man Singh of Kullu to surrender the fortresses of Bagi Ghach, Bans, Neru, and Balendhi—which he had recaptured after the departure of Raja Shyam Sen—or else to come out and fight like a man and not resort to guerilla warfare. Man Singh scoffed at this challenge and said many unpleasant things about Mandi and its ruler. He defied Gur Sen and advanced on Chamar Pani with a strong force. The Mandi army was dispersed, and the hopes of Gur Sen were dashed to the ground. But within a month he again invaded Kullu with a very much stronger and larger force, and this time he succeeded. At the battle of Dhalpur—now the name of a street at Kullu—the Raja of Kullu was defeated and captured. He was dispossessed of all the fortresses he had misappropriated, and the town of Kullu itself was sacked. He now begged Gur Sen to spare him, promised that he would not encroach on Mandi territory again, and paid Rs. 2 lakhs in cash as expenses of the war. He also presented a dagger to Raja Gur Sen which is still preserved in the state armoury. Bajaura—not a natural boundary—was fixed as the boundary between the two states.

WAR WITH THE SUKET CONFEDERATES.

It will be remembered that the Rana of Nachan had been captured by Raja Shyam Sen, and he had ever since been kept under surveillance in Mandi. The attempts of the ruler of Suket to affect or secure the Rana's release had been failed time after time. He now

decided to make one last effort and entered into an alliance with the Raja of Kullu—who was again too willing to cooperate against Mandi —and with one Nawab Hussain Khan. The forces of the allies advanced on Mandi. Gur Sen, although he was taken unawares, rose to the occasion, and prepared to meet the enemy. He took up a strong position at Taliahar—about three miles from Mandi—with 1000 men selected partly from the waziris of Balh and Pandoh, and partly from that of Sanor. The contingents of Kamlah and Anantpur were stationed at Yhene-ki-dhar; 500 men were posted at the boundary and 1800 Rajput musketeers were put on duty at the Tumabare ka nala. As Gur Sen's brother Dhan Chand, and his son Tikka Sidh Sen were too young yet to take part in the fighting, they were sent to Kothi Batauhli for safety. A vakil of Nawab Hussain Khan, came through Pairi Pasta,* and presented himself before Raja Gur Sen. After showing his credentials he demanded, in the name of his master, the immediate release of the Rana of Nachan failing which he threatened dire consequences. Not daunted by these threats Gur Sen took the extreme step of cutting off the head of the Rana and placing it on a salver he asked the vakil of the Nawab to take the Rana back to his friends. Horror-stricken and frightened out of his wits the Vakil fled in all haste to his master, and told him how desperate and fearless his adversary was. The Nawab issued orders that the allied forces should attack the enemy the following day. Meanwhile, a very interesting incident happened in the Mandi camp. A "Bahrupia", (mummer) said to be of Batala, was in attendance on Raja Gur Sen, and offered to drive away the Nawab and his men single-handed, if he was assured of a decent reward. Thinking that the fellow was up to one of his usual amusing tricks the Raja promised him a handsome reward. The mummer retired to his tent and asked a scribe to write a *firman* purporting to come from the Moghul Emperor in which Hussain Khan was ordered on pain of the highest displeasure to abandon his expedition and proceed at once to the Deccan where a rebellion had been reported. With this bogus *firman* the mummer went to the Nawab. The latter asked for a day's delay so that he might before leaving for the Deccan, settle the hash of the Hindu Raja of Mandi, and invited the (self-made) Imperial messenger to watch the game. But the faithful mummer said even an hour's delay would not be tolerated by the Emperor, and insisted on his leaving at once. Hussain Khan was completely taken in, and at once retired with his forces towards Sirhind, but died on the way before discovering how he had been imposed upon. Thus was bloodshed avoided by the

*Cf. the saying "This way Pairi, that way Pasta;" they talk a good-deal, but offer no hospitality.

RAJA GUR SEN OF MANDI.
1679 TO 1684.

resourceful and clever interposition of a common '*bahrupia*'. Gur Sen was extremely pleased with the man, and rewarded him handsomely. The relations between Mandi and Bushehr were cordial, and when Raja Hari Singh of Bushehr heard of the formidable alliance against Mandi, he hastened with his army to the help of his kinsman who met him and offered him a warm welcome at Gutkar. Their combined forces wrested some fortresses from Suket, and Mawi was annexed to Mandi territory after the former's rebellious Rana had been killed.

KHELOR ATTACKED BY SUKET.

A daughter of Raja Shyam Sen was married to the Raja of Bilaspur. The latter left a minor son named Tikka Bhim Chand. Taking advantage of the prince's minority the Raja of Suket with the help of the Governor of Lahore, invaded Bilaspur. The Dowager Rani sought the help of her brother Raja Gur Sen who mustered as many men as he could call up at once and hastened towards Bilaspur. A number of his men entrenched themselves at Khare ke Bar, and he himself took up a strong position at Rabbi Mat. It is said that several hill chiefs had made common cause against Kehlor and Mandi; but thanks to the chivalrous and gallant conduct of Gur Sen, the confederates could not succeed in conquering Kehlor, and parcelling out the territory among themselves. The Katoch chief complained to the Nawab that their discomfiture was due to the luke-warm half-hearted mummer in which the Guler army had fought. A similar accusation was made by the ruler of Guler against the Katoch chief of Kangra. The Nawab was inclined to believe the former, and acting as the representative of the Governor of Lahore he took away the Jamadari of the hill states from the Katoch and gave it to the Ruler of Guler.

After ruling for 5 years Raja Gur Sen died in 1684.

CHAPTER VI.

RAJA SIDH SEN, 1684—1727.

RAJA Sidh Sen was admittedly one of the greatest rulers of Mandi. He ruled for 43 years and during this period he made his power felt all over the hill States, and considerably enlarged his territories particularly at the expense of Bhangal, Suket and Kullu.

In the beginning of his reign, however, Sidh Sen found himself up against a coterie of officials who were doing very much as they pleased, each one of them bent upon self-aggrandizement. But Sidh Sen was not the man to be thus effaced and reduced to a cypher. He poignantly felt his position and confided his bitter feelings to Mian Jappu — an illegitimate son of Raja Shyam Sen. This man was extraordinarily clever and capable, and Sidh Sen could not have turned to a better person for advice. Jappu, evidently not unmindful of his own interests, told the Raja that the ambition and high handedness of the self-seeking officials could only be curbed if he (Jappu) was formally invested with the powers and authority of a Minister. When this was done with due formality, Jappu soon showed that he meant business. He was determined to use to the fullest extent the ample powers with which his master has invested him. He got together all the old papers and made searching enquiries into the various grants and jagirs, abolishing those which were frivolous or tantamount to misappropriations or conferred illegally, and cutting down others which believed to have been obtained as the result of bribery. He proved himself the relentless enemy of all dishonest and corrupt officials and made them disgorge their ill-gotten gains. His strong hand made itself felt even in the case of the Dowager Rani who had somehow or other managed to considerably augment her jagir and allowances. These were reduced by Jappu to what was put down in the original grant. The Rani was very angry and some sort of palace revolution might have ensued had not Jappu tactfully mollified her by sending her costly presents and convincing her that whatever he had done and was doing was for the good of the State. It is said that Jappu's mother was an exceedingly wise woman, and in many knotty problems of administration was a source of inspiration to Jappu, who

naturally treated her with the highest respect and veneration. As the result of his vigorous measures of reform Jappu was soon able to restore the finances of the State to a flourishing condition. But his most enduring work was his revenue settlement the main principles of which practically remained in force for about 200 years and which was only abolished when a regular settlement was made in 1917. Realizing the difficulties of the poor agriculturists—dependent entirely upon an uncertain rainfall and never able to make any provision for 'a rainy day'—Mian Jappu devised a system of *Sawai* loans in kind enabling a man to borrow grain from the State stores on condition that he returned next year 25 per cent. more than the quantity borrowed. The same rate (25 per cent. per annum) was charged on loans in cash to enable the agriculturists to buy bullocks or other necessary articles. There was one piece of legislation which reflects the greatest credit on Jappu and makes one wonder at his sagacity. Even at the present day one hears so much about the disastrous consequences of unwarranted expenditure which a Hindu incurs in connection with births, betrothals, marriages and deaths. The evils of this pernicious system are generally recognised now, but few people have the courage of their convictions and few can break through the shackles of a merciless custom. If this is the state of things at the present day is it not wonderful that more than 200 years ago Mian Jappu, the practically illiterate Wazir of an out-of-the-way hill State—made and introduced salutory rules restricting expenditure on the functions and ceremonies mentioned above, and also placed restrictions on the use and manufacture of liquor?

WARS AND CONQUESTS OF SIDH SEN.

Mian Jappu was in charge of the civil administration and Mian Bir Singh, a gallant soldier of good extraction, was made the Commander-in-Chief of the Raja's forces. And the Raja had good need for a man like Bir Singh for he was very anxious to launch on a series of wars with a view to winning glory and fame.

Soon after his accession Hatli was conquered and annexed. A curious story is related about the then Rana of Hatli. It is said that he had gone mad and one of his insane hobbies was to go and lie down near a water-mill and tell every body that he too was a water-mill. Women who went to the real water-mill to get their grain milled were compelled by the Rana to bring wild berries and put them in his mouth so that he might also perform the functions of a mill. This stupid practice of the Rana caused a lot of annoyance to the poor industrious women who had perforce to pander

to the mad whims of their mad master. One day a Brahmin woman put a rabbits exereta instead of berries, into the Rana's mouth. After masticating the stuff for a while he felt the difference in taste and asked the woman what it was that she had put into his mill. She replied that as she was a poor woman she could only afford to take an inferior grain to the mill, but that it was the duty of the latter to grind whatever was put into it. The Rana was furious and after blackening the face of the Brahmini turned her out of Hatli. She went to Mandi and complained to Raja Sidh Sen against the Rana's mad escapades. This gave Sidh Sen a pretext for making war on Hatli and annexing it to his territory.

MURDER OF PIRTHI PAL OF BHANGAL.

Bhangal had long been a distinct principality under its own Raja with the capital at Bir Bhangal. It included most of the country along the outskirts of the Dhaula Dhar between Kangra and Kullu, —now called Chhota Bhangal and Bir Bhangal—and a large portion of territory north of the Beas, now in Mandi, as also Bara Bhangal at the head of the Ravi Valley, and Paprola and Lanod now in Kangra.* Pirthi Pal its ruler at this time had as one of his ranis a princess from Mandi. He developed into a madcap voluptuary and spent most of his time in drunken rivelries. He scandalized every body by his mad pranks and was always found in the company of Gaddi women, drinking and dancing with them. He entirely neglected his work as a ruler, so that his people were disgusted with him. But he was not merely a voluptuary, he was also a mischief monger. Sidh Sen determined to annex the territory of Bhangal. He sent an urgent message to Pirthi Pal to come to Mandi. Inspite of some unfavourable omens and portents which should have deterred a superstitious person from proceeding on the journey, Pirthi Pal went to Mandi, where ostensibly he was well received, but found himself under surveillance. After a few days he received a private warning that the real object of Sidh Sen was to kill him and annex Bhangal. Thoroughly alarmed, but unable to escape, Pirthi Pal appealed to Suket to help him in getting out of the clutches of Sidh Sen. In response to this request some men came from Suket dressed as purchasers of salt. Hiding Pirthi Pal in a sack they had almost succeeded in taking him away when the plan failed at the last moment by the ferry contractors searching the sacks and discovering and rearresting the unfortunate chieftain who was now taken to the Damdama Palace where he was imprisoned for some time and ultimately assassinated. His head was buried in the middle of Sidhsar Tank in front of the

*J. P. H. S. VII, 13.

Damdama and his legs and arms in the four corners of the tank.* The treacherous deed was done but Sidh Sen gained little by it for as soon as the ruler of Kullu came to know about the murder he took possession of Chhota and Bara Bhangal and a portion of Bir Bhangal, and the Raja of Kangra annexed certain other parts. Little was thus left to Sidh Sen to show for his treacherous deed.

THE TERRIBLE FAMINE OF 1683.

There was a terrible famine in these parts in 1683 as the result of a total failure of rains throughout the year. A large number of people died of starvation and in some places the living fed on the dead. The ravages of the famine continued for nearly three years during which the entire population was prostrated. Although in those days there was no regular system of famine relief even in the Imperial territory, it is satisfactory to record that the Mandi Durbar did whatever it could to alleviate distress among the people. State granaries were opened, in many cases land revenue was remitted, advances were given to the Zamindars and relief was administered in other ways; but inspite of these measures several thousand persons died of starvation in Mandi territory alone. It is a well known fact that the hill people are very superstitious and believe in innumerable deities. There is hardly a village and habitation where one stone or metal deity or another is not found. In cases of domestic trouble the householders look upto the family god or goddess for help and relief; and when the whole population is threatened or affected by a famine or some other visitation, the bigger national deities are approached and offerings are made at their shrines; but when these importunities fail to move the gods, sterner measures are adopted and the *gurs*—(priests through whom the god acts or speaks) are kept immersed in water or made to stand in the sun or kept starving and not allowed to sleep and until they can persuade their deity to show clemency to the suffering credulous humanity. There is no doubt that the energies and resources of all the hill deities must have been taxed to the uttermost during these devastating three years of famine. Some may be inclined to scoff at these customs and beliefs, but to a sympathetic mind this simple implicit faith is beautiful.

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*A lamp is kept burning in the centre of the tank, and a tiny fountain is always playing upon the spot where the head was interred.

SIDH SEN ON THE WAR PATH.

In 1687 O.B. Sidh Sen met Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur at *Jaboth* (near Bhambla about 24 miles from Mandi) and their combined forces attacked Katoch territory and sacked and then burnt the towers of Jai Singhpur and Bijapur now in Palampur Tehsil.

The same year Sidh Sen's son Shiv Jawala Sen recaptured Hatli and married the daughters of Mian Abhai Chand and Mian Jai Ram.

In 1688 the Nachanwalas were turned out of Nirandhi which was annexed.

In 1688 Sidh Sen conquered the forts of Nachani and Machrot. He had somehow the firm belief that if he built a temple and dedicated it to some god or goddess, fresh acquisition of territory invetiably followed; and so when he wanted to conquer Waziri Lad and Daled he prayed to the god Ganpati, and vowed that if he was victorious he would make a perpetual grant of land to the god out of the conquered territory. Accompanied by Mian Bir Singh, the Commander of his forces, Raja Sidh Sen made successful war on Lad and Daled and after annexation fulfilled his promise to Ganpati. Similarly he defeated the valiant Rana of Tikroo who offered a desperate resistance and when Tikroo fort had been taken the conqueror duly showed his allegiance to Baba Baij Nath and granted him a large slice of valuable land in village Tikroo.

In 1690 Sidh Sen's forces under the leadership of Prohit Dhanu and Bisht Hari Das beseiged and captured Garh Dhanesar, about 4 miles from Mandi. Some villages of Kamlah Kot and Naraingarh were also annexed after their chieftains—the Ranas—had been defeated and killed.

There was a place called Rao Garh situated on the top of the Pattan Kandha hill. It was brought to the notice of Raja Sidh Sen that at Raogarh the revolting custom prevailed of charging a fee on every dead body cremated. Sidh Sen could not tolerate the existence of this iniquitous imposition and he therefore put an end to it by annexing the fortress.

It is said that Jalpa Devi invoked Raja Sidh Sen in a dream to build a temple for her at Sidhpur. The temple was duly built and Sidh Sen used to spend a portion of the year at Sidhpur partly because

he wanted to be near his patroness—the Devi—and partly because he thought that the conquest of Daledh would be made easier if he attacked it from Sidhpur. A favourable opportunity was not long in presenting itself. The Wazir of Rana Daledh brought two pretty girls for his own harem, but the report of their beauty having reached his master he was called upon to surrender them. Rather than do his the amorous Wazir was prepared to betray his master, and knowing Raja Sidh Sen's ardent desire of conquering Daledh he forthwith went to him and advised him to hide himself with a strong detachment in the neighbouring forest of Saroa where the villain would decoy the Rana by promising to deliver the two girls to him there. The plan succeeded and the poor Rana was killed and Daledh annexed.

WAR WITH KULLU.

A man named Budhu was the Kotwal of Mandi. There was no love lost between him and Mian Bir Singh the Commander-in-Chief. For a time Budhu had the ear of the Raja, and wielded considerable influence over him. He poisoned Sidh Sen's mind against Bir Singh to such an extent that the latter was not permitted even to pay his respects to the Raja. Strongly resenting this undeserved slight the Mian retired to his village Batauholi. Now throughout these regions Bir Singh enjoyed the reputation of being the bravest and the most capable general, and as soon as it was known that he had left Mandi, the enemies of Sidh Sen thought it a suitable opportunity to wipe off old scores against him, for they believed, and with some reason, that most of the credit of Sidh Sen's conquests belonged to Bir Singh. The Raja of Kullu attacked Mandi and entrenched himself at Bagi Thach. Sidh Sen tried to dislodge him, but failed. He now realised that he had done a great wrong to Bir Singh, and that Bir Singh was the only man who could drive away the enemy. Sidh Sen, therefore, went in person to Batauholi and asked Bir Singh's mother to intercede, on his behalf, with her son, and persuade the latter to resume the command of the army. The lady took the Raja's visit as a great honour and by her good offices a reconciliation was effected between the irrate Rajput and his repentant master. With Bir Singh at the head of the Mandi army no one had any doubts as to the sequel. With his customary valour Bir Singh attacked the Kullu forces and defeated them after both sides had several hundred killed and wounded.

It is related that at Bagi Thach where this battle took place, two nephews of Budhu Kotwal were on duty. They were caught napping and Bir Singh punished them barbarously. Budhu tried to

use this incident against Bir Singh, but he found to his chargin that he had lost his hold on the Raja who was now anxious to lavish his regard and favour on the invincible Bir. After defeating the Kullu forces and driving them away Mian Bir Singh returned to Mandi, but the enemy took advantage of his absence and occupied Ganwathr ki Dhar. When the Mian heard about it he forthwith proceeded to the place and without any difficulty recaptured it. But the snake was only scotched not killed, and Raja Man Singh of Kullu was only biding his time. Some time afterwards he thought there was a favourable chance.

One of the Dangiahi Mians had offended Sidh Sen and had been turned out of Mandi. The Mian took refuge with Man Singh and persuaded him to make war on Mandi once more. With 4000 men and passing through Kandhi Katola Man Singh attacked Mandi and ravaged every village or habitation that came on his way. Eventually he entrenched himself at Reerh. It is said Man Singh had been given a magical *Nasingha* (horn) by a Sadhu (Ojha Madan) whom Sidh Sen had defeated in a magical contest, and who to avenge himself had gone to Kullu and presented Man Singh with this horn which he said, when blown, would strike terror into the heart of Sidh Sen. Man Singh according to the story, used this instrument of evil with deadly effect, and as soon as it was blown, the redoubtable Sidh Sen became mortally afraid and fled away towards Kamlah. Halting on the way he ordered his own kettle drummer to sound the retreat: but the man taunted him and said that he would have been glad if Raja Gur Sen had had a daughter instead of a son. "It is quite unworthy of you" said the man to his ruler "to run away like a coward and leave Mandi and your people to their fate". These words drove all fear out of Sidh Sen, and retracing his footsteps he fell with headlong valour on the enemy. After a pitched battle Man Singh sustained a severe defeat. He fled from the field, and was hotly pursued as far as Katola Khandi. The heads of 380 Kullu men were brought to Mandi and made into a necklace for Mahadev Bhut Nath.* There were great rejoicings after this great victory and Sidh Sen gave generous rewards to all those who had distinguished themselves in the battle. He was particularly kind to the kettledrummer who had at a critical time, given him such excellent advice and had thus saved the Raja from tarnishing his great name.

*Whenever the rains fail, the image of Bhut Nath is constantly bathed to induce rain.

RAJA SIDH SEN OF MANDI

TRIAL BY ORDEAL.

More or less resembling the trial by ordeal in vogue in Britain in the early feudal days, a method for determining the truth known as *Gecha ka dibh* (the oath of the oven) is recorded to have been in vogue in Mandi in the time of Raja Sidh Sen, though there are reasons to believe that it was a heritage from the past. Just behind the *Smaila* School there was a smithy. A suspected criminal was brought here and on the palms of his hands were placed a piece of thread and a leaf of the pipal tree and on the latter were drawn seven (magical) lines in *ata*. Then a red-hot piece of iron was placed on the leaf. If the palms of the hand were burnt,—the heinousness of the offence or otherwise depending on the degree and the extent of the burn,—the man was considered guilty; if he remained uninjured he was declared innocent and let off. Even in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh two men Panjkoo and Santa of village Khaliana Hatli were subjected to this trial and Panjkoo won the case. His descendants talk with pride of this ordeal up to the present day.

THE STORY OF A DANGU.

Once Sidh Sen reached Anantpur rather late at night and found the gates of the fort shut. He announced himself as the Raja but the sentry on duty (Dangu) had a high sense of discipline and refused to open the gates, saying that, under the Raja's own strict orders, no one was to be admitted into the fort after nightfall. Sidh Sen threatened and told the fellow that he would hang for his impudence, but the man was adamant and the Raja had to spend an uncomfortable night in the open. The Dangu was brought before Sidh Sen in the morning, and every one expected that he would be hanged, but the Raja publicly applauded his conduct and his high sense of duty and held him out as a model worthy of imitation by others. A suitable reward was given to the brave sentry and a *santha* (a patta or grant) bestowed on him granting to him and his decendants in perpetuity the sole privilege of serving as Dangus at the Anantpur fort.

VISIT OF GURU GOBIND SINGH.

It was about this time (probably in 1701) that, harassed by his enemies, but quite undaunted and firmly believing in eventual victory, Guru Gobind Singh, who had sought refuge with the Raja of Kullu with a view to enlisting his sympathy and seeking his help in the noble task of emancipating the Hindus from the Mohammadan yoke and saving the Hindu religion from extinction, came to

stay in Mandi. The Kullu Raja, with whom Guru Gobind Singh had been staying just before his migration to Mandi, seemed to be devoid of the spirit of chivalry and of love for his mother-land. Instead of helping the Guru Sahib he imprisoned him and shut him up in an iron cage. He forgot, however, that to a great man "stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage" and the Guru was soon able to escape* and make his way to Mandi. Here Raja Sidh Sen had had a premonition of the coming of the Guru, and on the latter's arrival offered him a warm welcome and treated him with the greatest respect. The place where the Guru stayed at Mandi was until recently, a small tumble-down hut; but thanks to the sympathetic interest of the present enlightened Ruler, and as the result of the efforts of Rai Bahadur Diwan Dina Nath, the present Chief Minister to His Highness, a fine Gurdwara has been built at the sacred spot and the memory of the Guru's visit is thus kept green. The Gurdwara is situated just above the precipitous bank of the river Beas on the present motor road to Kullu.† The Guru deliberately selected this secluded spot in spite of the request of Raja Sidh Sen who was anxious to lodge his honoured guest in his palace. Right in the bed of the river and just below the Gurdwara there is still to be seen a huge rocky boulder of a greenish grey colour on which the Guru used to perform his spiritual devotions. A quieter, cleaner, and a more picturesque place could not have been chosen. This boulder has survived more than two centuries of corrosion by the waters of the rapid Beas, and apart from the superstition, which usually winds itself round such objects, there seems no doubt that it will continue to greet the eyes of a devout pilgrim for a very long time to come.

Local tradition asserts that during his brief stay in Mandi Guru Gobind Singh gave many proofs of his miraculous powers. The Guru and the Raja and latter's courtiers were one day watching the river when the Guru asked Sidh Sen to send for a pitcher. When it was brought the Guru ordered that it should be allowed to drift down the stream and asked the Raja's men to shoot at it. Not a bullet grazed the pitcher and the Guru said"

جیسے بچی یہ ھنڈی — ویسی بچے تیری منڈی

(Just as this pitcher has not been affected by the bullets so will thy Mandi ever remain safe).

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*The Sikhs believe that by some miraculous power the Guru flew along with the cage to Mandi.

†In this Gurdwara are still preserved three sacred relics of the Guru: a huge Makhlack, an Arbab (a musical instrument) and a cot.

So well pleased was the Guru with his host that when the time for his departure arrived he told Sidh Sen to ask for a boon. The Raja said he wanted immunity for Mandi against all enemies. The Guru said

منڈی گو جب لوٹین گی — آسمانی کولی چھوٹین گی

(when any one sacks Mandi heavenly cannons will be fired). It was probably due to the respect for the Guru's blessing that during the major portion of the Sikh period no Sardar ever ventured to harass Mandi town. When Mandi came under the Sikhs the Khalsa collectors of revenue would not enter the city. When Guru Gobind Singh left Mandi* Raja Sidh Sen escorted him upto the State boundary. To commemorate his visit the Guru was requested by the Raja to lay the foundation stone of the fortress named Guru Kot.† The Guru returned the courtsey by asking the Raja to perform a similar ceremony in respect of a fortress named Sidh Kot. Some manuscripts of the Guru were highly prized by Sidh Sen and kept in safe custody in the treasure house at Kamlah.‡

SIDH SEN'S BOOK OF MAGIC.

It was believed by the Mandi people of the time that Raja Sidh Sen possessed miraculous powers, and some stories are still current regarding the exercise of such powers particularly in connection with the visit of a Deccani Brahmin named Madan whom Sidh Sen is said to have defeated in magical contest! The source of his miracle working was a tiny book of charms and spells which would enable the possessor to fly to any place he wished to go to or to get whatever he wanted. The story goes that this wonderful *gutka* belonged to one Guru Tara Nath of China who by virtue of it used to send one of his disciples every day to fetch water from the Ganges for the Guru's ablutions. In the course of his aerial flights the disciple used to rest for few moments at a thatched hut near the harem in Mandi. One day he fell asleep there. Raja Sidh Sen, who happened to go to the place quietly took away the *gutka*. When the disciple awoke he was struck with consternation to find the book gone, but on his entreaties Sidh Sen gave it back to him. When the disciple reached his destination in China Guru Tara Nath asked him why he was late.

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*The date of this event is fixed at just before 1702 when the Guru visited Kurekashetar at the time of the solar eclipse. The Guru left Mandi to fight the Raja of Kalmot (Hoshiarpur District).

†About 20 miles from Mandi. It is now in ruins.

‡As the result of the Guru's visit, later on during the Khalsa reign, Sikh religion spread in the State.

He related the whole story and praised Sidh Sen's magnanimous conduct. Tara Nath was much pleased with Sidh Sen and knowing in the plenitude of his spiritual powers that he would not miss the magical *gutka* he told his disciple to present it on his behalf to Sidh Sen the following day. This was done and Sidh Sen found himself possessed of miraculous powers. Sidh Sen must have been a very unambiticus Raja not to have secured the sovereignty of the whole country for himself with the help of this miracle working gift!

It is said that when he found his end approaching, Raja Sidh Sen—fearing lest the book might fall into undeserving hands and be used for unworthy objects and be thus a source of great evil and disaster—threw it into the swift current of the Beas and it was lost for ever.

Raja Sidh Sen used to venerate Sadhus and religious devotees, and they were always welcomed at Mandi; but Raja Man Singh of Kullu treated them with contempt and often used to stone them. One of the Sadhus cursed him and said that some day he would also be stoned to death. In 1710 Raja Man Singh attacked Chawansi.* Strange to relate, Raja Gur Sen of Suket asked Raja Sidh Sen for help which the latter readily accorded. A large number of men were sent from Mandi under the command of Prohit Bishanpat and Bisht Hari Ram. The first battle took place at Barokhar where Wazir Dayal and several other officers of Suket were killed. In the second battle which was fought at Rani Kot the allied forces experienced a reverse and Bisht Hari Ram and some 25 officers of Mandi and Mian Salahu and a large number of Suket men were killed. The victorious Man Singh then went towards Bushehr and Kumhar Sen to wage war against the rulers of those States. It was when he was fighting against Kumhar Sen that some one hurled a stone at him and killed him as had been predicted by the Sadhu.

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1717.

It is stated that in 1717 there were unusually heavy rains and the Beas and the Suketi were flooded to such an extent that the Panjbaktar Temple, dedicated to Shiva was completely submerged and some other temples along with their idols were also swept away by the waters. There was great loss of life and property.

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*Now in Suket territory.

THE TEMPLES AND SHRINES BUILT BY SIDH SEN.

Sidh Sen built Sairi Tank—in front of the Damdama palace —and in the northern corner of it a temple was dedicated to Sidh Bhairon, Mahadev and Sidh Kali. The dedication was celebrated with ceremony and 8000 men were feasted at the Brahm Bhoj ceremony. The Sairi Tank was kept in a good condition for some time after Raja Sidh Sen, but later fell into disrepair and is reputed to have been occasionally used as a place for burying alive criminals, or those who were guilty of treason. For reasons of sanitation and hygiene the tank has now been dried up, and attempts are being made to grow flowers and plants in it. Right in the centre of this tank there is a cistern of water with a lamp post standing in the middle. This cistern is always kept full of water and every night a lamp is kept burning here in memory of Pirthipal of Bhangal whose head was buried below the post.

Sidh Sen is reputed to have built 14 temples of which those of Sidh Ganpati—near Soora Kothi, and Trilok Nath (the dynastic deity), Panjbaktar and Batak Bhairon, Sidh Sar, Sidh Jalpa, Sidh Bhadra, and Shambhu Mahadev (near Padal on the bank of the Beas) are important.

Raja Sidh Sen died in 1727,* after a long reign of 43 years. For some mysterious reason Sidh Sen had instructed his body should not be cremated until the fourth day of his death; but lest the dead body might putrify the funeral rites were performed after waiting for 24 hours. Two Ranis, thirty *Khawasis* concubines and 5 maid-servants burnt themselves on the funeral pyre as *Satis*.

SIDH SEN'S CHARACTER.

Sidh Sen was a remarkable ruler and a great warrior with a passion for conquest. A veritable giant physically, extremely alert, intelligent and resourceful, a good judge of character, thoroughly kingly in his aspect and possessed of a masterful personality and 'the power in the eye that bowed the will'; invariably victorious and invincible, it is not surprising that Sidh Sen was credited by his people with miraculous powers, and was believed to have spirits and genii under his control. Some clothes alleged to have formed a part of

*He is believed to have been over 100 years old at the time of his death, but this is probably an exaggeration, for if he reigned for 43 years he must have been about 60 years old when he began ruling: this seems to be quite wrong.

Sidh Sen's wardrobe are still preserved in the State Treasury; but it is difficult to believe that they could have fitted any normal human being. There was a vein of sternness in Sidh Sen's character, and he is believed to have mercilessly treated even the members of his family on the slightest provocation or whenever his wishes were in the least degree thwarted. However, every thing known about him confirms the belief that he was an extraordinary man, and may justifiably be considered one of the greatest, if not the greatest, ruler of Mandi in the old days.*

*An old sword of Raja Sidh Sen is still preserved, and it is believed that all cases of difficult labour are cured if the sword is bathed in water and the latter given to the patient to drink. Similarly a pair of Sidh Sen's shoes—a huge thing—is kept and is effectively used for "taming shrews." An enormous stone image—believed to be life-size—of the Raja is still to be seen in the Ganpati Temple.

RAJA SHIVJAWALA SEN OF MANDI.

CHAPTER VII.

RAJA SHAMSHER SEN, 1727—1781.

SHIV Jawala Sen, the son of Sidh Sen, had died five years before his father's death leaving two sons behind. How one of the latter named Shamsher Sen was recognised as the heir is related in an interesting story. Two wives of Shiv Jawala Sen gave birth to sons within a few hours of each other. Each Rani claimed her son as the elder one, for the all-important question of succession rested on one of the infants being recognised as the eldest, and each party had staked everything on the result of this struggle for power. Finding himself in a quandary the Raja adopted a strange mode of deciding the question. He gave orders that all the people of the town should assemble near the temple of Bhut Nath to witness the settlement. A sword was placed side by side with a heap of dust; and the two infants were brought and allowed to play there. One of them at once toddled up to the sword and laid its tiny hand on it; and the other showed preference for the heap of dust. In the estimation of the Raja this proved conclusively that the first one was older than the other, and so he was named Shamsher Sen*, and the other was given the name of Dhur Chatia or Dust-eater.

Shamsher Sen was a young child of five when by the death of his grand-father he was elevated to the gaddi. The administration was in the hands of the Hatiali Rani,† the mother of Shamsher Sen, assisted by Mian Jappu to whom was also entrusted the highly responsible duty of the up-bringing of the Prince. It has already been mentioned that Jappu was an extraordinarily capable man and so long as the Dowager Rani trusted him and co-operated with him the administration of the State was carried on quite smoothly. Jappu was anxious not to give the Rani any cause for offence, and realizing that he was, after all, a reflected glory, he always gave her credit for all his own good work, and ascribed his success to her genius and wisdom. For a time the Rani appreciated Jappu's honest and loyal work, so much so that she put her brother under his tutelage. But it

*Shamsher means a sword.
†Daughter of the Rana of Hatli.

was not long before the Rani's mind was poisoned against the able Minister by interested parties. All sorts of motives were ascribed to him, and every action of his was misinterpreted until the vile machinations succeeded, and the Rani lost her trust in Jappu. The breaking point was soon reached. The Dowager Rani went on a pilgrimage to Naina Devi, (on the hill above the lake of Rawalsar) and on her way back she stayed at Hatli. She was deeply shocked and grieved at the wretched condition in which she found her kinsmen, and she resolved to restore to them the ilaqa of Hatli which Sidh Sen had conquered. On her return to Mandi she asked her Dharam Bhai Hari Das—who along with one Dharam Nath led the intrigue against Jappu—to help her in achieving her object. There were by this time two parties at the court : one consisting of Jappu, Mian Bir Singh, Prohit Dev Datt and their adherents; and the other comprising Dharam Nath, and Sidh Sen's Sartoras : Sainu, Trainu, Assu, Nadu, Ishar, and some relations of the Hatiali Rani. The restoration of Hatli was well nigh affected when Jappu came to know of it, and placing his loyalty to the state above his own interests, he strongly opposed the measure. He took out the old records, and showed to the Rani the orders of Raja Sidh Sen definitely and solemnly, forbidding the alienation of any the slightest portion of the conquered land of Hatli. This was gall and wormwood to the Rani, and she was thenceforward on the look-out for an opportunity of doing away with the faithful Wazir particularly because Shamsher Sen was now growing up, and beginning to understand things, and it was felt by the intriguers that there was not much time left for them to wield power and feather their nests. Sometime afterwards Jappu went, as usual, to pay his respects to the queen mother when, presumably at her instigation, he was pounced upon and hurled down from the *Deohri*, and when he fell below, some sweepers, who were on the alert, killed him. When young Shamsher Sen heard of this foul deed, he ordered Dharam Nath to be apprehended and thrown down from the very place from which poor Jappu had been hurled; and getting the head of the man severed he placed it on a salver and sent it as a present to the Rani. She was awfully annoyed, and realizing that the young chief could no longer be kept in leading strings she left Mandi, and took up her residence at Ghasnun.

Shamsher Sen now took up the reins of administration in his own hands and his first step was to undo everything that his mother had done. Throughout his rule of 54 years one notices a marked vein of eccentricity. The fact that he was always behaving queerly, and was constantly being imposed upon by his low companions, makes one suspect that he was defective in intelligence.

Curiously enough, he developed a special liking for men of low-caste and position who, by the then prevailing rules of society, would not have been allowed even to cross the path of a Raja. To the utter disgust and alarm of the higher circles the young Chief surrounded himself with these dregs of society, lavishing all sorts of favours and honours on them. These upstarts acquired such tremendous influence over the Raja that they practically monopolised the business of the State, and did whatever they liked.

JALEBDARS.

The personal servants of the Raja were called Jalebdars,* and these posts were always prized by people of this class, as their constant attendance on the Chief gave them many opportunities of self-advancement and gain. Practically all the Jalebdars in the household of Raja Shamsher Sen were men of the lower orders: for instance the important post of Chauntra-Ka-Vakil was held by Bhadia, a blacksmith. Most of these men belonged to the village of Dhaban near Khud Suketi, and whereas previously every one looked down upon them, they were now courted and feared. Their women began to appear in costly dresses and shawls, and to wear gold ornaments. Now, in those days the people of the lower strata of society were not permitted to wear silk clothes and gold ornaments: these luxuries were a distinct mark of superiority reserved for the Brahmins, Kshattriyas, and Rajputs. Nor were the Shudras allowed to learn, be taught or repeat the sacred Mantras. But there was no limit to the ambition of these people in the service of Shamsher Sen. Time soon came when they broached the subject of their ostracism to their master, and complained to him that in spite of his generous treatment of them, they were still treated as pariahs by the rest of the people. They claimed to be treated on an equal footing with Brahmins and Rajputs, and as the first step towards their elevation they demanded initiation into the charmed circle of the high caste men. They wanted to be invested with the sacred thread, and also to be taught the sacred Mantras, and be allowed to worship the Deities without suffering any disabilities. It was easy enough for them to convince the weak Raja of the justice of their claims, and he forthwith ordered the Pandits and Prohits to accede to the wishes of his favourites. Very much against their wishes, but to save their skins some of the Pandits carried out the Raja's orders, and those who refused, in the name of their *Dharma*, to be parties to this *Shudhi* (work of uplifting the depressed classes) were severely dealt with.

*Jaleb [Jalus] means procession.

After the *Shudhi* these men demanded inter-caste and inter-communal dining. Against this measure there was a storm of opposition; but the Raja was a puppet in the hands of the *dagis*: and no one could transgress his orders with impunity. In their despair the man of the higher orders went to Batauhli to seek the advice of Mian Bir Singh, the retired Commander-in-Chief, who was highly respected and held in great esteem on account of his age and the great services he had rendered to the State. He was told of the sorry state of things at the court, and while the deputation was talking to the venerable Mian, a messenger of the Raja arrived with an invitation for Bir Singh to the great inter-caste feast which was to be held at the Madho Rao temple in honour of the Raja's new found companions, and to which every person of position or importance was bidden. Mian Bir Singh repaired to Mandi, and by a clever move he persuaded the Raja to hold not one dinner at one place, but at least four at four different places so that those *dagis* who participated in the first dinner might be converted into Kanets, those who joined the second might be made Khatris: the third set might be called Rajput, and the fourth Brahmins. The real object was to create jealousies and dissensions and to throw the apple of discord among the 'depressed classes' by creating these artificial distinctions among them. This illusory elevation into four water-tight compartments was sure to lead to trouble. The newly-converted Kanets would be jealous of the Khatris; the latter would hate the Rajput, and the Brahmin would look down upon all the rest of them. It was too subtle a game for the Raja or his favourites to see through. The dinners were organised on the lines suggested by Mian Bir Singh, but further care was taken to select such houses for the meals as had two or three separate dining rooms, so that although ostensibly it might be considered an inter-caste dinner, yet in reality there was no mixing up of the two classes. This last plan did not succeed altogether, and the *dagis* were loud in their protests. A still deeper game was necessary to defeat the unwarranted demands of these men, and if possible to make a clean sweep of them. Knowing the predilections of their master in favour of the depressed classes, the officials sent word to another class of such men (known as Kalrus) to come to Mandi and oust the *dagis*. An urgent request was also sent to Raja Devi Chand of Kahlor to come and save the situation. Devi Chand arrived post-haste, and remonstrated with Shamsher Sen over the whole affair, and particularly effective was his argument that the direct consequence of this Shudhi (purification) movement would be that all the other hill-chiefs would refuse to have any social or matrimonial relations with Mandi. Shamsher Sen now revealed his mad and monstrous plan and said that he intended, after a time, to kill all the *dagis* and to raise a pyramid of their heads

so that he might sit on it and perform a special *jap* which would make him the greatest king on earth, and Mandi the grandest and the most gorgeous place under the sun.

However, the Raja of Kehlor succeeded in persuading Shamsher Sen to issue an order decreeing the execution of all the wretched *dagis*. Many of them were killed, and many more sought safety in flight.

KULRUS COME INTO POWER.

The Dagi peril was over, but the Raja would not give up his low companions. In place of the former, the Kalrus rose into power. They had free access to the Raja, and their influence was felt in all branches of the administration. After a time they also fell victims to the wrath of their ruler, and many of them were tortured to death.

THE DRYING OF SILVER COINS IN THE SUN.

How the Raja's servants made a fool of him, and plundered him right and left will be illustrated by the following story :—

One day some of his attendants advised him to take his bath on a heap of 1¼ lakh of silver coins. This, they said, was a ceremony the performance of which was essential for a mighty and world-famed ruler like him. The vanity of the Raja was tickled by this proposal, and the sum of 1¼ lakh of rupees was taken out of what Mian Jappu had saved for the State. On this glittering heap Shamsher Sen took his bath, and at the suggestion of the covetous servants, the coins were spread out in the sun to dry. A large sum was misappropriated, and the sun was held responsible for the contraction that had taken place in the silver. Then the Raja was told that whenever a cultivator lets his corn dry in his fields, it was customary to give away a few handfuls to every beggar who asked for charity. Similarly the Raja should give away in charity handfuls of silver coins to his servants. Thus more money was misappropriated. Not content with this loot, the rascals depleted the heap of silver still further by driving the analogy of the corn to such grotesque length that it is surprising how Shamsher Sen was taken in. They trod upon the silver—taking it to be corn, with their shoes to which plenty of glue had been applied, and as many coins as the glue could hold were thus removed, and so on until very little of the money was left and then they put it in a small basket (drumlike) and at nightfall pushed it down a high place, and when search was made by torches obviously only a few coins could be recovered. The loss of the money was thus attributed to an accident, and these perfidious men were happy in the enjoyment of

their ill-gotten gains; but before long their vile tactics were revealed to the Raja by their jealous rivals, and having been thoroughly exposed and publicly disgraced most of them were put to death. Another set of unprincipled ruffians then came into power, and gorged their ravenous maws until they also fell, and so on.

SHOOTING IN THE AIR.

Once Raja Shamsher Sen was holding his daily Durbar when he asked for his bow and arrows, and started shooting in the air in the direction of Suketi Khad and Bhangal. After a whole quiverfull had been finished he volunteered an explanation to the amazed courtiers. "The Kullu forces," he said. "are attacking our territory on the outskirts, and have beseiged several of our fortresses and our garrison are hard pressed; and I shot these arrows to drive away the enemy. I have succeeded, and you will get news of our victory to-morrow," Who dare contradict even the madcap hallucinations of an autocrat, and sure enough the news was concocted the following day that the Raja's vision was quite correct, and a dire calamity had been averted by his timely intervention, and his arrows had worked havoc, and the enemy had fled helter-skelter.

JAWALA MUKHI APPEARS AT MANDI.

When it is generally known that the Ruler is weak in intellect, unscrupulous villainy does not consider the perpetration of any fraud too bold or grotesque. Prohit Basantu saw no reason why he should not start a 'stunt' and make some money by trading on the gullibility of his superstitious master and his people. He took some candles and fixed them on a spot just above the Padal Maidan. Then the sacred word of the Prohit went forth that Jawala-Mukhi* had made her appearance at Mandi, and that she demanded of the Raja costly clothes and ornaments. The wily Prohit, constituting himself the Devi's priest, took good care not to allow any one to go too near the rock which seemed to eject tongues of fire. Crowds of simple-minded, gullible humanity flocked to the place, and presents poured in. The stunt was kept up for a short time, and when Basantu had made a fortune, the Devi disappeared as suddenly as she had come.

THE BABA.

A Gosain named Bhiwani Gir was responsible for a similar stunt. He dressed up a stone idol, and gave out that the 'Baba' had miraculous powers; and that it had wonderful human appetites and

*A place of pilgrimage in the Kangra District.

could eat, drink and smoke. Every day an elaborate meal was prepared for the Baba, and thanks to his generosity, more than a hundred men were fed at the shrine. The Baba was given a regular grant in cash by the State, and all his other requirements—as interpreted by Bhiwani Gir—were liberally supplied. Not content with a stone image Shamsher Sen ordered one of silver weighing 5 maunds. Now nothing would please the Raja more than to see the Baba wedded and happily settled in life. The impecunious Raja of Kehlor was asked to marry his two daughters to the Baba, and he welcomed the prospect of adding five maunds of silver to his empty treasury. The Baba, with his marriage-party, was taken to Bilaspur with great pomp and show, and the guests were feasted and entertained as usual. The Baba was delighted with the reception accorded to it, and decided to live permanently at his father-in-law's house. So the marriage party returned, and the poor Baba soon tasted the joys of matrimony in the melting pot. The blattering chroniclers—loth to commit the sacrilege of painting a Raja as an unhinged imbecile—try to give plausible explanations for such mad freaks. For instance this Baba episode is explained as a veiled chivalrous way of helping a brother-prince—who was poor, and had asked for monetary help—without wounding his pride and without allowing him to suffer in his own estimation.

MANGTU.

A low-caste man named Mangtu was appointed by Raja Shamsher Sen as his advisor and called as the wazir of the Chauntra*, and the fellow exercised a lot of influence. Two of his kinsmen named Dhani Ram and Tulsi Ram—who had been in the service of Raja of Kullu, but had been turned out in disgrace,—came to Mandi in search of employment. Jobs were found for them by Mangtu, and waxing bold they requested the Raja to arrange for their marriages in Khatri families. The Raja agreed, and Mangtu was on the look-out for suitable matches. The Khatris were perturbed, and hastened to give away their daughters in marriage to suitable or unsuitable men of their own caste rather than lower themselves by a misalliance with a low-caste upstart. Nothu Katri, however, could not find it in his heart to throw away his daughter who was reputed to be a paragon of beauty. Mangtu, relying upon his hold over his master, forcibly removed the unfortunate girl from her father's house, and she was immediately married to Tulsi Ram. This outrage created a sensation in Mandi, and a deputation of the leading men of the town waited on the Raja to tell him how strangely his subjects resented Mangtu's atrocious conduct, and how they felt that no one's however was safe in

*He used to hold his court on a platform.

Mandi as long as men of that type were allowed to weild unrestricted power. Shamsher Sen ordered the arrest of Mangtu, but the villain fled to Ropa, a village in Suket territory. All his property was confiscated and presently he paid for his sins by dying a dog's death. It was the rainy season, and millet was growing plentifully. Tormented by the pangs of hunger Mangtu came out of his hiding place at night to steal some cobs of millet from the neighbouring fields of Ropa. When watch-men in the field heard a rustling noise in the dark they thought there was a pig in the fields and fired a matchlock in that direction. Thus was killed a pig indeed, and the world was rid of a scoundrel.

MARRIAGES OF SHAMSHER SEN.

The first marriage of Raja Shamsher Sen took place, when he was yet in his teens, with the daughter of the Mian of Mukhanpur. His second marriage, which took place in 1743, was celebrated with the daughter of Mian Alam Chand Katoch of Jaisinghpur.

WARS AND CONQUESTS.

In the earlier part of Shamsher Sen's reign Kullu was in the throes of internal trouble, and taking advantage of the turmoil Mandi tore away a part of its territory. Raja Jai Singh, the Ruler of Kullu was driven out by the rival faction, and sought refuge at Lahore. The valuable Chohar *ilaqa*, along with the forts of Amargarh, Deogarh, Mastpur, and Sari were seized by Mandi.

In 1727 the fort of Kiranpur in Bhangal was occupied after a seige of two months. After this the Mandi troops, which were still stationed at Kiranpur, received orders to proceed to Saraj and Madhopur. Led by the Commanders Surjan Singh and Dan Chand Madhopur and Raigarh in Mandi Saraj were stormed and captured.

ADINA BEG.

Towards the year 1745 the rulers of the hill states heard with alarm of the approach of the redoubtable Adina Beg, the Moghul Governor of Jullundur. Through sheer ability this man had risen from the ranks to the position of the Governor of Jullundur.* Later on he rose still higher, and became the Viceroy of the Punjab in 1755. As a rule the Moghuls, with a few exceptions, had not worried much about the hill states, and were content with their suzerainty being acknowledged

* Latif's History of the Punjab, p. 214.

by these chiefs. So long as the tribute was duly paid a policy of 'let well alone' was considered the most expedient. More important interests had kept the Moghuls busy elsewhere, and the difficult hill country was allowed to settle its intestine quarrels as best as it could. Sometimes one of the hill chiefs—more loyal and obedient than the others—would be made a *Thanadar*, but this was invariably a mere titular dignity. The Emperor had the right of demanding personal or military service from any of the chiefs under his suzerainty, occasionally a hill-chief or his son would be given a *mansab* at the Imperial Court, and even entrusted with the command of an expedition. Sometimes to punish a recalcitrant chief, and oftener inspired by a lust for plunder one of the *Subas* would lead an expedition into the hill territory, and after overawing one or more of the chiefs, and after collecting as much money and other valuables as circumstances would permit, he would return to his capital. Generally speaking the mere approach of the Moghul army was enough to overawe the chiefs when inspired by an instinct of self-preservation they would vie with one another in offering their submission. It was on a few occasions only that any one offered resistance, to win immortal glory on the field of battle.

To remind the hill chiefs that the Moghul sovereignty was something real, and not to allow them to forget that they owed allegiance to the Emperor, Adina Beg used to make incursions into the hills. Towards the latter part of the year 1745 he advanced to Guler, but Raja Dalip Singh could not fight against the Subah, and offered his submission. In the course of a triumphant march through the hill territory Adina Beg received the submission of Rajas Ajit Singh of Jaswal, Tehri Singh of Mankot, Dev Dutt of Nurpur, Madan Pal of Bhaboria, Yadu Pal of Kutlehr, the Rai of Bhangal and several other chieftains; and with their co-operation he advanced upon the Katoch Raja. It seems that the other chiefs were jealous of the latter, and since he would not readily come forward with an offer of submission, Adina Beg was easily persuaded to attack the refractory chief. Jaisinghpur and Bijapur were sacked and razed to the ground. Adina Beg intended to invade Mandi also; but apprized by Raja Dalip Singh Guleria of the threatened danger, Raja Shamsher Sen deputed Mian Udhar Singh of Mandi—a friend of Dalip Singh—to convey his greetings to the Suba, and to assure the latter of his loyalty and devotion to the Emperor. Partly as the result of this, and partly because Adina Beg had heard of the impregnibility of Kamlah Fort, he expressed his delight in accepting the loyal assurances of Shamsher Sen. Indeed, so pleased was he that he offered Bijapur to Mandi, and asked Shamsher Sen to re-populate the ravaged town. After this Adina Beg returned to Jullundur.

FIGHTING AGAINST KULLU.

In 1753 the forces of Mandi ravaged the Bir belonging to Kullu, and put to fight the Kullu forces occupying it. Dev Dutt, the son of Prohit Surjan, and Mian Badalia were incharge of the operations and commanded the forces. After the fight a quarrel arose over the land of Sooja (a village); and the matter was referred to Raja Ummaid Singh of Chamba, and an amicable settlement was arrived at and the *status quo* was maintained.

MANDI AND SUKET FIGHT.

In 1760 there was a clash between Mandi and Suket, and a battle was fought on the plain of Balh just below *Dodhe*. Although the Mandi forces were victorious yet they lost heavily in men, and Thakar Ram Singh was killed. Wazir Salahu of Suket was also killed in this battle.

A STRANGE INCIDENT.

It is related that once several hill-chiefs, including Raja Devi Chand of Kehlur, hatched up a conspiracy against Shamsher Sen with a view to parcelling out his territory among themselves. They assembled at Hatli and invited Shamsher Sen to the place. Brushing aside the warnings of his officials, he proceeded to Hatli, where it was soon apparent that the Rajas meant mischief. The story goes that while they were about to apprehend Shamsher Sen he yawned, and in his open mouth each Raja saw his own image.* This was enough to frighten them all. They realized that they were up against a miracle-worker, and immediately left for their respective states. Shamsher Sen remonstrated with Devi Chand Kehluria and said that at least he should have behaved better and not proved himself ungrateful for the many favours that had been conferred upon him from time to time. To further convince Devi Chand of his occult powers Shamsher Sen, while talking, seemed to go off into a trance; and on coming to he said he had paid a visit to Bilaspur where he had seen the Rani smoking a *Huqqa* (hubble-bubble), and listening to the music of low-caste musicians; and that a gate-keeper named Nangru

*This is probably based, by the flattering native chronicler on a similar story relating to Sri Krishna. It is said that as a child Krishna was playing in the dust, and had swallowed a small lump of earth when his adoptive mother Yasudha came up, and after rebuking him she asked him to open his mouth. When he did so Yasudha was amazed to see in the mouth of the child an image of Triloki (Akash, Patal and Prithvi) thus proving that he was an incarnation.

RAJA SHAMSHER SEN OF MANDI.
1727 TO 1781.

had been unjustly put in chains under the orders of the Rani. The story goes that on his return home Devi Chand verified all these statements as correct.

KIMU.

At Sandhe there lived two brothers named Ram and Sham. Ram was the Wazir of the Rana of Lad. The Rana had bestowed two pretty girls upon Ram, and they were duly married to the latter; but when shortly afterwards the Rana wanted to take back the girls Ram refused to hand them over. Upon this the Rana began to harass Ram, but the Wazir was able to get rid of his oppressor by enticing him into a jungle and getting him done to death by some of his enemies. After this Ram is believed to have taken up employment under Raja Sidh Sen, and rendered meritorious services to him. This Ram had a son named Kimu, who from a precocious child grew into a remarkable man. In the time of Raja Shamsher Sen he was selected to serve as a Vakil representing Mandi at the Court of Lahore. Although Kimu was practically illiterate, knowing only a little Tankri, he was acknowledged even at Lahore to be an extraordinarily clever and capable person, and he gained the esteem of the Governor of Lahore, and was able on several occasions to render Mandi valuable service.

DHUR CHATIA RISES INTO POWER.

After the assassination of Jappu, no person of outstanding ability or personality was available who could carry on the administration. But before long Dhur Chatia, the step-brother of Shamsher Sen, made himself felt and came to the fore-front. He was a very clever man, and soon acquired so much influence and power that he practically monopolised all authority in the state reducing Shamsher Sen to a mere figurehead. He had as his co-adjutor another clever man named Mian Uchhab. Dhur Chatia had married in a Chuhan Rajput family of village Kas in the Nair Kalan ilaqa; and he brought several Chuhans to Mandi and gave them responsible posts so that in every department, and even in the Raja's household Dhur Chatia had his own men, who owing everything to him, were very loyal and devoted to him, and kept him fully informed of everything that happened in the state as well as the palace. Not content with the almost supreme authority that he wielded in the administration the ambitious Dhur Chatia began to interfere even in the household affairs of the Raja, and by placing all sorts of disabilities and restraints on the latter made him feel extremely unhappy.

Surma Sen, the son and heir of Raja Shamsher Sen, had been born to Rani Katochi. When the Tikka grew up he was put under the charge of the devoted Bairagi Ram. Dhur Chatia wanted either to get rid of Surma Sen or at least to gain complete control over the young prince, so that his own power might not decline when the later reached his majority or succeeded to the gaddi. The Rani was, however, taking good care not to allow the Tikka to fall into the clutches of his uncle. Indeed, she would not allow the prince even to go out of the palace. Foiled in his attempts Dhur Chatia decided to use force and take away Surma Sen from the protection of his mother. As a preliminary step Dhur Chatia apprehended all those officials and attendants who were loyal to Shamsher Sen, and sent them over to Kamlah Fort. The way being thus cleared, he entered the palace and wanted to see the Tikka. The Rani had, meanwhile, been apprized of his wicked intentions, and had hidden her son and his tutor Bairagi Ram under a wooden dais, so that Dhur Chatia searched in vain for his nephew. It was now considered unsafe to keep Surma Sen in Mandi, and along with his faithful tutor and Kaith Saulu, he fled to Tanda, a village in Suket territory; but fearing lest his uncle's influence at Suket should succeed against him, the poor Tikka went to Bilaspur where he expected a warm welcome. But he was bitterly disappointed when Raja Devi Chand of Bilaspur flatly refused to give him protection probably because the Raja was afraid of Dhur Chatia. From Bilaspur Surma Sen proceeded towards Kangra, and encamped at village Tikkar near Mahal Mori. When Raja Tegh Chand Katoch heard of Surma Sen's arrival in his territory he forgot all old animosities and inspired by the chivalrous sentiments of a Rajput he went to Tikkar to personally offer a hearty welcome to Surma Sen. He was not only lavish in his hospitality; but promised Surma Sen every help in turning out Dhur Chatia from Mandi. When it was known that Surma Sen had succeeded in winning the friendship and help of the Katoch Raja, the tide turned in his favour, and he found the number of his followers growing, and also received cordial messages from the Mandi people. Feeling his position quite strong he returned to Mandi, and had no difficulty in expelling the usurper, who fled towards Jammun and died there. Mian Uchhab, who was at Suket when this happened, made up his mind to return to his village Sadoh in Mandi; but when he was on his way home he was stopped at the Padhru (plain) of Chambi by some sepoys who told him that Surma Sen did not wish him to enter Mandi territory, and that he would be well-advised to seek refuge elsewhere. The proud Mian thereupon drew his sword, and in the skirmish that followed five or six men were killed on either side, and Himtu Kotwal of Mandi received a nasty cut on his hand. Uchhab was, however, able to make good his way to his

village. Surma Sen now felt that sterner measures were necessary to drive out Uchhab, and he sent a strong detachment to Sadoh for this purpose. Uchhab was engaged in *pooja* when the Raja's men burst into his house. He immediately got up, his sword flashed from its scabbard, and he valiantly attacked the intruders. He was, however, overpowered, and a man named Sukhia cut him down. Uchhab's wife, who had been a horrified eye-witness to this tragedy, and who did not wish to survive her lord and master, at once drove her poniard into her abdomen, and being pregnant she tore out the foetus, and sprinkled the blood on a tulsi plant* which grew in the courtyard, and cursed her oppressors. The devoted couple thus lost their lives, but their two daughters were taken to the harem. They were, however, inconsolable, and as they refused to eat or drink they died within a few days. The story goes that Shamsher Sen was heartily sorry for this ghoulish deed for which he was not personally responsible. The victims of his anger appeared to him in a dream, and frightened him to such an extent that with a view to propitiating their spirits he gave a religious grant in honour of the deceased, and placed their stone images on the *Sahagala*.

THE PUNJAB DURING SHAMSHER SEN'S RULE.

During Shamsher Sen's rule the sovereignty of the hill states changed hands many times. The Moghul rule in the Punjab gave place to the supremacy of the Duranis under Ahmad Shah in 1752; but the new sovereigns of the Punjab were content to retain Mannu as the Viceroy of the Punjab. Those were troublous times, and the sovereignty of the Punjab changed hands with astonishing rapidity. The Durranis were followed by the Sikhs who occupied Lahore in 1758 under Jassa Singh, but were expelled soon after when the Mahrattas appeared on the scene. They left Adina Beg as their Viceroy of the Punjab, but he died soon after in 1758. His Mahratta successor Shamaji was defeated by Ahmad Shah in 1759 who further defeated them finally in 1762 at Panipat. But the Afghans were not allowed to enjoy their government of the Punjab peacefully. The Sikh confederacy now rose into power, and the distracted state of the country left the hill Rajas very much to themselves. About 1770, however, Jassa Singh made himself the master of Jullundur Doab, and he held many hill states possibly including Mandi in tribute. He was defeated in 1775 by Jai Singh Kanhaya who conquered Kangra about this time.

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*This is the reason why the Mandial Rajputs do not allow the *tulsi* plant to grow in their houses.

the former made the Raja cultivate the habit of drinking *bhang*, and thus rendered him—subservient to his own designs. It is possible that Surma Sen might have been fond of *bhang*, but his record shows that he was certainly not a puppet in the hands of his Minister, and in any case the latter's influence over his master was in no sense of an evil nature. A bard, named Man Sukh, sings the praises of Bairagi Ram and compares him to Raja Bir Bal—one of the nine gems of Akbar's court.

FIGHT WITH KULLU.

Sometime after the accession of Surma Sen the Raja of Kullu died and his *Sartorah* Pritam Singh succeeded him. Finding Pritam Singh weak and insecure on his gaddi Surma Sen desired to satisfy his desire for distinction on the field of battle. Much against his own judgment Bairagi Ram was compelled to issue orders to all the Waziris to send men and material for the war the Raja had determined to declare against Kullu. Orders had to be obeyed but a more half-hearted army than the one which encamped at Baindhi could not be imagined. The chronicle grossly exaggerates when it puts down the number of the Mandi army at 20,000 as against 7,000 of Kullu, but even with the enormous odds against them the latter dispersed the army of the Mandi Chief without the slightest difficulty. Not a shot was fired, not a sword flashed from its scabbard, not a man was killed, and yet the Mandi army fled at the mere sight of the enemy. Surma Sen was amazed at the cowardice of his men, but the fact was that somehow or other the expedition was most unpopular and no one had wished to fight. With bitter reproaches and taunts on his lips, and with shame in his heart poor Surma Sen, who had hoped to be welcomed back as the conquering hero retreated to Mandi, and so depressed and disappointed was he that for several days he did not appear in public.

MARRIAGE OF THE RAJA'S SISTER.

The daughter of the Katochi Rani was married with great pomp and show to Raja Parkash Chand of Guler. It was customary in those days for the Raja of a State to levy a sort of impost on his people whenever there was a marriage in his family, and we are told that the realizations from this tax on this occasion were enormous as the people were prosperous and happy and ungrudgingly gave more than was expected of them. For several days the marriage party was lavishly entertained, and a very handsome dowry was given by Surma Sen. On their way back the marriage party was pounced upon by some Katochs and every thing was plundered and taken away.

RAJA SURMA SEN OF MANDI.
1781 TO 1788.

Surma Sen had to improvise another dowry for it would not do for his brother-in-law to return home empty handed.

FIGHTING WITH SUKET.

While Surma Sen was ruling over Mandi, the neighbouring State of Suket was governed by Raja Ranjit Sen. A *Sartorah* of the latter-named Kishen Singh weilded considerable influence in the State. He told his father that he wanted to conquer Balh and Ner from Mandi. Raja Ranjit Sen—who had no illusions about his own strength and resources as against Mandi—tried to dissuade Kishen Singh from making the foolish attempt. But the head-strong youth did not listen to his father's sage advice, and making common cause with Kahloor attacked Ner without any warning. Raja Surma Sen immediately summoned the forces of the Pachet and Pingla Waziris to meet the attack; but meanwhile the gallant men of Ner had succeeded in driving away the enemy by rolling down huge stones at them. Although Kishen Singh suffered this preliminary set-back he soon re-formed his forces and again led them against his opponents; but the latter proved too strong for him. One of the Mandi soldiers—a man from Pingla threw a lance at Kishen Singh wounding him severely and knocking out some of his teeth. Kishen Singh became unconscious and fell down from his horse. At their leader's discomfiture the Suket forces fled from the field after losing a good many men. Kishen Singh was safely carried back to Suket where he had to face his father's justifiable reproaches.

KULLU'S AGGRESSION.

About the year 1781 the Raja of Kullu attacked and occupied Garh Chheti and Trilokpur. Mandi appealed to the neighbouring hill chiefs for help against a common foe, and the allied forces met those of Kullu at a place called Sehal. After furiously fighting for two days the Kullu forces capitulated and animosities ceased for the time being. But the snake had been scotched not killed, and soon afterwards the Kullu forces again attacked Mandi territory.

Sardar Pandit Jai Kishen, Wazir Jhagru, Mian Parvin, Mian Gauhar Singh of Guler, Bisht Din Dayal and Bisht Achhru Ram were sent from Mandi to dispossess the enemy. The forces of Anantpur, Hatli, and Gumma Waziris entrenched themselves at Dev Parao; but a terrible snow-storm overtook them and raged for four days. The snow completely covered up all the tracks, and this fact and the intense cold greatly disspirited the Mandi men. Several died of cold, and a large number lost the use of their limbs. To avert the Kullu menace, Wazir Bairagi Ram made frantic efforts, and thanks to the help given by the rulers of Jaswan, Guler, and Datarpur, he eventually succeed-

ed in sending reinforcements to the scene of action. The allied forces attack Dharam Cheti and Trilokpur and dislodged the enemy from those strong positions but the latter set fire to Dharam Cheti. The Kullu men then occupied Dhamakpur, but were driven out from this place also. They repeated the game time after time; they would occupy a stronghold and on being driven out they would destroy or set fire to it; but eventually Kullu had to acknowledge defeat, and had to pay a large indemnity to Mandi and her helpers.

THE RISE OF RAJA SANSAR CHAND.

During the palmy days of the Mughal Empire the star of the Katoch rulers of Kangra had practically set, but when that great empire began to totter and the process of dismemberment began with the conquest of the Punjab by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1572, the Katoch chiefs began to look up, and taking advantage of the general laxity and unsettlement that prevailed they left their places of retirement, and gradually recovered all the territory their ancestors had lost. But no Katoch chief could be worthy of his proud Rajput ancestory whose flag did not fly from the citadel of Kangra : a stronghold round which there was a halo of romance and religion. But unfortunately for the Katoch. Kot Kangra was held by an exceptionally strong and determined man : Saif-ullah Khan, the Mughal Governor of Kangra, who foiled all attempts to capture it for many years.

The year 1776 will ever be memorable in the history of Kangra for it saw the accession of Raja Sansar Chand to the Katoch throne. The name of Sansar Chand is one to conjure with in the Kangra hills, and to him was given the task of not only rebuilding the decayed fortunes of his house, but also of making his name resound far and wide as a great conqueror and ruler. Soon after his accession Raja Sansar Chand made gallant attempts to regain Kot Kangra, but in vain. Meanwhile kaleidoscopic changes had been taking place at the court of Lahore, and the Sikhs had risen to power. One of the Sikh Chieftains named Jai Singh Kanhaya had, as said before, established himself as Governor of the Jullundur Doab including the Kangra hills; and by a stratagem he took possession of the Kangra fort in 1781. In 1785 Sansar Chand got his chance. He joined the Sikh faction formed against Jai Singh who was defeated at Batala. This necessitated his retirement from the hills. Thus Kot Kangra passed into the hands of Sansar Chand whose joy knew no bounds when, after a long long time, he found himself in possession of the coveted fort. In the past whoever had occupied Kot Kangra had possessed some kind of implied superiority vis-a-vis the other hill chiefs. This theoretical superiority Raja Sansar Chand now deter-

the cleaning of the augean stables, and Gosaoon justified his selection as head of the council. Economies were effected in every department, superfluous posts were abolished, all useless and unnecessary expenditure was prohibited. Strict supervision over every branch of the administration resulted in a steady increase in revenue. The system of forced labour that festering sore in the hill States, was made less rigorous; and some rules were made regulating widow remarriages.

MIAN BHUP SINGH'S ALLOWANCE FIXED.

Towards the end of 1851 Mian Bhup Singh claimed a maintenance allowance for himself and his brothers. This claim caused a lot of trouble in the Council of Regency and when it was suggested that an allowance of Rs. 3,000/- a year should be fixed, the proposal was opposed tooth and nail by Gosaoon and his colleagues. Government suggested Rs. 840/-; but Bhup Singh considered this too little and refused to accept it. Eventually a compromise was effected whereby the Mian was given an annual allowance of Rs. 1,220/- on condition that he never entered or caused trouble in the State.

THE MUTINY OF 1857.

When the terrible storm of 1857 burst over Hindustan, the Mandi State, true to its allegiance to the British Government, sent a contingent of 500 men to Jullundur. Gosaoon also helped the Government at this critical time and was granted a jagir of one thousand rupees.

THE MARRIAGES OF RAJA BIJAI SEN.

In July 1859, when he was only 13, Raja Bijai Sen was married to the grand-daughter of the Raja Datarpur. There was a romance in connection with this marriage. A man named Uttam dressed himself as a female penetrated into the Raja's palace at Datarpur and succeeded in bringing away the picture of the princess with a view, no doubt, to satisfying the curiosity of the youthful would be bridegroom. When the matter was reported to the Raja of Datarpur, he demanded Uttam's head, for no crime is more heinous than for a stranger to enter a Raja's harem. Young Bijai Sen was, however, not willing to sacrifice his faithful servant, and he connived at the latter's escape to Hardwar and afterwards gave him a liberal grant of land in Malam and other villages.

Four days after his first marriage Bijai Sen married a neice of the Raja of Haripur Guler. Altogether he is reported to have married as many as eight wives : the daughter of the Rana of Keonthal, the sister of Mian Kishen Singh Guleria, the daughter of Mian Jagat Singh of Suket, the daughter of Mian Hira Singh of Datarpur, the daughter of Mian Raghbir Chand of Datarpur and of Mian Udham Chand of Datarpur.

BIJAI SEN'S EDUCATION.

Bijai Sen grew up to be a very intelligent lad. Indeed he had given promise of a brilliant future even at the age of four. It is related that one day Raja Balbir Sen was holding his court and little Bijai Sen was sitting in his lap. A man was being tried for an offence, and the Raja was inclined to impose a heavy fine on him ; but before pronouncing orders he playfully asked his son what fine should be imposed. The child said at once "*one dhabba*" (one pice). The Raja accepted the verdict, and when they searched the man they found that he had just one *dhabba* with him. This was obviously pure coincidence, but the event was interpreted as a sure sign of a great intellect, and the Raja himself thought that since he had such a precocious son, capable of dealing out justice at the tender age of four, he had not long to live. Strange to say this premonition came true for the Raja died the following year. If the responsible duty of bringing up and educating such an intelligent child had been entrusted to a competent tutor, it is probable that Bijai Sen would have developed into a truly remarkable Prince; but unfortunately Prohit Shiv Shankar was about the last man to have been put in charge of the latter. As has been remarked already, the Prohit was a narrow-minded priest deeply learned in the ancient scriptures, but lamentably lacking in those qualities that are essential in the tutor of a young prince. He had a horror of every thing modern, and was particularly averse to his young ward learning any Persian or English. Bijai Sen acquired a good knowledge of Sanskrit, but the cramping influence of the Prohit's methods of instruction had distinctly failed in building up character. Particularly sinister was the influence exercised by the Prohit's son who was a constant companion of the Raja and who taught him many bad habits. Conscious of their responsibilities and being convinced that Bijai Sen's education was grossly neglected the Government warned the Prohit that unless he reformed his antidiluvian methods of instruction and created a healthier atmosphere around the prince he would be dismissed; but the warning fell on deaf ears and things worsened. "Not only was the education of the Raja neglected, but both the Prohit and Wazir Gosaoon winked at,

even if they did not encourage, excesses which seriously injured the constitution of the young Prince.* Nothing could be more dangerous than allowing the education of future ruler to be neglected, and government felt that time had come to take drastic action. A personal enquiry was held at Mandi by the Commissioner Trans-Satlej States in May 1861, and as a result the sanctimonious Prohit was dismissed and along with his son banished from Mandi, and was also fined Rs. 2,000/- for his culpable and deliberate negligence. Curiously enough the vacancy created by the dismissal of the high priest was not filled up for about two years, so that Bijai Sen remained without a tutor, and the Regency Council carried on with only two members. Probably no suitable man could be immediately found to replace the Prohit. In 1863, the Government of India appointed Mr. Clarke, an officer of the Education Department, as tutor to the Raja.

VISIT OF LORD ELGIN.

In November 1863, Lord Elgin, the second Viceroy of India, toured the Kangra Valley, and on his way from Kullu he passed through Mandi territory, and halted at Bhadwani, Jhatingri and Drang. His Excellency granted an interview to Raja Bijai Sen and his mother at Drang. Unfortunately the Viceroy was taken seriously ill soon afterwards and died of heart disease at a place called Chauntra and was buried at Dharmsala.

SALUTE GRANTED TO THE RAJA 1864, AND HIS INVESTITURE 1866.

In April 1864 the Government of India granted the Raja of Mandi a permanent salute of 11 guns. On the 12th of October, 1866 Raja Bijai Sen, having attained his majority, was invested with full powers. The investiture ceremony was performed, on behalf of the Supreme Government, by Sir Douglas Forsyth, Commissioner of Jullundur. There were wide-spread rejoicings and festivities throughout Mandi, for even the best of minority administrations in an Indian State is never very popular, and their ingrained sense of veneration for royalty makes the people ardently look forward to the time when their prince can take the reins of government in his own hands. But if a minority administration is never very popular, it is, at any rate, very much cheaper, and invariably succeeds in saving money. During Raja Bijai Sen's long minority of 15 years a fair amount of money had been saved, and on the auspicious occasion of his investiture he wise-

*"Rajas of the Punjab," Griffin, Page 598.

ly decided to earmark a lac of rupees for works of public utility. "These included a school, hospital and post office at the Capital, a good mule road from Baij Nath to Sultanpur in Kullu, over the Bhabbu Pass and *serais* and travellers' bungalows along the line of road from the Kangra Valley, through Mandi, towards Kullu and Simla".*

One of the first acts of Raja Bijai Sen would have been to set aside Wazir Gosaoon whom he had never liked, and to appoint his uncle Mian Bhag Singh as his Wazir; but probably as the result of gentle diplomatic pressure he allowed Gosaoon to remain in office. Gosaoon knew how to trim his sails, and as President of the Council of Regency, he was a different man to what he now became as the Raja's Minister; but he never succeeded in winning the confidence of his master.

Raja Bijai Sen started on his work very well. He seemed to be keen on introducing reforms and adopting measures for the amelioration of his people; but it was soon apparent that the faulty education that he had received as a minor, and the unhealthy atmosphere in which he had been brought up, had wrought great mischief, and the high hopes that had been entertained as to his turning out an extremely capable ruler, were not completely fulfilled. Mr. Clark, who had been appointed Councillor to the Raja, and Wazir Gosaoon constantly quarrelled with each other; the Ruler showed indifference to State business; all expenditure on works of public utility was stopped, and the administration fell into the greatest confusion. Only two years after the investiture the Viceroy found it necessary to convey a warning to the Raja, and for a while things improved. Gosaoon died in 1870 and it was hoped that, left to himself, Mr. Clark would be able to set matters right; but unfortunately he did not possess the administrative ability and the personal qualities so necessary for a man at the helm of the affairs in an Indian State, and Government decided to remove him from Mandi in June 1870. Mr. E. Harrison, B.C.S. was appointed in Clark's place as Councillor and he was instructed to advise the Raja in all matters of administration, and to introduce reforms 'long promised and long delayed'. Mr. Harrison was a very able and conscientious officer, and under his guidance the administration improved considerably. He overhauled every Department, and even at the risk of making himself very unpopular, he discounted the payment of certain unwarranted allowances to State officials and granted them an increase of salary instead. Mr. Harrison continued to do very useful work until 1872 when he was transferred to a superior post.

*Griffin, pp. 599, 600.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

During Raja Bijai Sen's rule several high personages visited Mandi or passed through Mandi territory. In October 1871, Mandi was honoured by the visit of Lord Mayo. Grand preparations were made, and the Naya palace was specially prepared for the Viceroy's reception. His Excellency was accompanied by Mr. A. Brandreth, Commissioner of Jullundur. At a Durbar all principal State officials and prominent townsmen were presented to the Viceroy. Bijai Sen requested Lord Mayo to get for him a copy of the Vedas which had yet been printed in Germany alone, and the Viceroy was pleased to have them sent to him. Another durbar was held by Lord Mayo at Palampur at which Raja Bijai Sen and the other hill-chiefs were present.

Sir Henry Davies, and Sir Robert Egerton Lieutenant-Governors of the Punjab visited Mandi State in 1874 and 1880 respectively. The latter did not visit Mandi town, but halted at Bhadwani, Jhatingri and Dhelu, and met Raja Bijai Sen at Jhatingri. Sir Charles Aitchison, accompanied by Colonel Gordon Young, the Commissioner, visited Mandi in 1883, and stayed at the capital for three days en-route to Kullu.

In 1894 Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant-Governor, paid a visit to Mandi on his way down from Kullu. He was accompanied by Mr. Smith, the Commissioner. His Honour encamped on the Padal, and performed the opening ceremony of the iron suspension-bridge over the Suketi Khud which was named after him.*

In September 1899, the Mandi State was again honoured by a Viceregal visit. Lord Elgin II, after paying his homage to his father's grave at Dharmsala proceeded to Kullu and halted at Dhelu, Urla, Drang and Kataula on his way. The Raja met His Excellency on the Katindi Ridge. Sir Macworth Young, accompanied Mr. A. Anderson, Commissioner of Jullundur, visited Sakrauti, Urla, Drang and Mandi town in 1901.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES.

After the departure of Mr. Harrison in 1872, Raja Bijai Sen carried on the administration with the help of the State officials. His

*This bridge was removed in 1921, and a new pacca masonry one built in its place.

chief adviser was his own beloved brother Mian Pradhan Singh, who by his geniality of temperament, tact and ability made himself extremely popular with the people. Unfortunately he died prematurely in 1875 and his place, as Wazir was taken by Mian Uttam Singh who had been working as assistant to Mian Pradhan Singh and whose sister* was in the harem of Maharaja Sher Singh.

Mian Uttam Singh discovered that a large sum of money had been embezzled from the State Treasury, and after a rigorous enquiry the culprits were made to disgorge their illgotten gains.

THE RAJA BIJAI SEN ATTENDS THE DELHI DURBAR OF 1877.

A Durbar of unprecedented grandeur and magnificence was held at Delhi on the 1st January, 1877, at which Lord Lytton proclaimed the assumption by Queen Victoria of the royal title of Empress of India. Raja Bijai Sen had the honour of being invited to this Imperial Assemblage, and on his return from Delhi he ordered the Victoria Suspension Bridge to be built over the Beas in commemoration of the Proclamation Durbar. The bridge cost a lac of rupees, and satisfied a long-felt want. It has been the means of stimulating trade and has made travelling so much easier. The Mandi officers were invested with colours and the Union Jack presented to the State on his occasion is still kept as a precious treasure.

CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

Mian Uttam Singh was a man of mediocre ability and did not command much respect. He did not prove a successful administrator. The finances of the State were again in a mess: the expenditure far exceeding the revenue; and the courts of justice were dilatory and corrupt. Bijai Sen did not like Uttam Singh, and after reporting him to the Commissioner removed him from the office of Wazir, and gave it to his own younger brother Mian Man Singh assisted by Mian Bhag Singh and Padha Jiwa Nand. But this arrangement also came to an end when Mian Bhag Singh died in 1878. Consequently in 1879 a State Council was formed with Mian Man Singh, Padha Jiwa Nand and Munshi Ganga Singh as members. Mian Man Singh was to act as Chief Secretary to the Raja Sahib. For a short time, the work of administration went on smoothly; but some mischief-mongers soon succeeded in misinterpreting the reforming zeal of Mian Man Singh to the Raja, and brought about a rupture between the two brothers. The Mian resigned in disgust and went away to Muthra to end his days there. He

*This lady was the mother of Shahzada Sher Singh of Bareilly.

was an upright and conscientious, religious-minded man of very high principles and ideals. He worshipped truth and never broke his word. His death was deeply and widely mourned as that of Mian Pradhan Singh had been.

There seems to have been a great dearth of men of administrative ability in those days, for after Man Singh's resignation, Uttam Singh had to be recalled to office in 1880.

CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS.

"In 1881, the construction of several new lines of road was begun by the State, under the supervision of Mr. E. W. Purkis, Engineer. These were: a new road from Mandi to Kullu by the Dulchi Pass, 31 miles in length with the suspension Bridge over the Uhl river, at a cost of Rs. 40,000; a cart-road from Baij Nath to Mandi, and a road from Mandi to Bhamla, 26 miles long."*

MARRIAGE OF THE RAJA'S TWO DAUGHTERS.

In 1884 the marriage of the two daughters of Raja Bijai Sen to the Tikka of Bushehr was celebrated with great pomp and show. It is said that about 7,000 men were feasted for several days. Unfortunately, however, the festivities were marred by the outbreak of a virulent type of cholera which worked havoc in the town. Wazir Uttam Singh died in 1888 after remaining in office as Wazir for 8 years; and Lala Jawahar Lal, a Tehsildar in Punjab, was appointed in his place.

MR. MAYNARD DEPUTED TO MANDI.

The Durbar felt that in the interests of peace and order and good government, the services of an Englishman should be requisitioned, and at the Raja's request Government deputed Mr. (afterwards Sir) H. J. Maynard, of the Indian Civil Service, to Mandi for a year. Mr. Maynard was to be assisted by Sardar Jawala Singh.

"Mr. Maynard effected many improvements in the administration. He drew up instructions for the guidance of the Court, Civil and Criminal suits were defined and classified, rules for the hearing of appeals and revisions were modified, and the period of limitation fixed. He also drew up a careful note regarding *begar* or

*Mandi Gazetteer, p. 55.

(forced labour) and framed rules regulating and defining the rights of agriculturists in the forests."*

Mr. Maynard served in the Mandi State for a year only; but during this brief period he threw himself into his work with the same earnestness and devotion to duty as characterised him throughout his long and distinguished career. When he left Mandi in March 1890 he felt that he had not had much time to devote to the important work of forest administration, and the upkeep of roads; and he advised the Raja to appoint Mr. C. E. Fendall as Superintendent of Works to be incharge of Forests, Roads, Salt Quarries etc.

A DISTURBANCE, JUNE 1893.

For some time past the people of Saraj had been nursing some grievances in respect of certain forest rights, and the imposition of *begar* three times a year. The pretext for a disturbance was, however, found in the use of buffalo lymph for vaccination against small-pox. As has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, the people of Mandi, especially those living in the more remote regions of the State, are very superstitious, and the number of the gods and goddesses they worship is legion. Now one of the most important goddesses is "Sitla Devi" whose special domain is small-pox, and any one in any way interfering with her dispensations is believed to incur her severest displeasure. To the ignorant, simple-minded hill men vaccination itself was anathema, and it assumed a particularly heinous form when it was known that buffalo lymph was being used. So a large number of men rose against the authorities; but the disturbance was quelled without much difficulty and the ring-leaders were suitably punished. Opportunity was taken to redress some of the real grievances of the people. It was thought that this disturbance in Saraj was the indirect result of Wazir Jawala Singh's tactlessness and incompetence and he was, therefore, reverted to his post of Tehsildar in the Punjab; and Mian Udham Singh, another lent Tehsildar, appointed to succeed him. Raja Bijai Sen was very unlucky in the choice of his ministers. Fendall and Udham Singh could not get on well with each other, and their quarrels led to an *impasse* in the administration. It was, therefore, thought necessary in 1901 to remove both of them from office. Padha Jiwa Nand, who had taken up service in the Jodhpur State as member of Council, was asked to come back to Mandi as Wazir.

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*Mandi Gazetteer, p. 55.

THE RAJA'S MISFORTUNES.

In spite of his eight marriages Raja Bijai Sen had only two sons, but both of them died in infancy. This calamity shattered the Raja's nerves and his health broke down. He developed a marked fear of death, so much so indeed, that no one was allowed to talk about sickness or death within his hearing. Whatever vitality was left in him was undermined by the slothful habits he developed during the latter part of his life. Even if he had to move a step he would be supported by his servants. To make matters worse he developed cataract in his eyes. When all *vaids* and *hakims* had failed to cure the disease an English surgeon was sent for, and performed an operation by which vision was restored to one eye. But the Raja, who had very great veneration for the local gods and goddesses, attributed his partial recovery to the miracle wrought by Naina Devi in answer to his prayers; and in his gratitude he made an offering of two golden eyes to the goddess and rebuilt her temple.

CHARACTER OF RAJA BIJAI SEN.

Bijai Sen had a gentle and kindly disposition and a deeply religious mind. He had great love for his people and was generous to a fault. His lavish hospitality was well-known and he was hospitable to the rich and the poor alike. Towards the paupers, and the physically deformed and unfit he was particularly generous, and gave liberal allowances to helpless orphans and widows. He started several *dharamarths* where the poor were daily fed. The most notable charitable institution of this kind was established at Hardwar where many Sadhus, Brahmans and paupers were served with food at State expense. This institution is still maintained by the State. For the Sadhus and Faqirs the Raja had great respect, and was always entertaining a large number of them. He held the cow in great veneration and had provided many free grazing grounds for them. During his time Mandi was a favourite resort of learned pandits and sadhus, and many a Shastrarth (religious discussion) was held at which the Raja—no mean scholar of Sanskrit himself—presided. On such occasions two of his learned courtiers—Vaid Vidya Sagar and Padha Jai Dev—outshone all others.

Generally a Krishan Upasak (i.e. a worshipper of Krishna) Raja Bijai Sen devoutly worshipped all his deities, and was always making offerings to them, and kept their temples in good repair. At the Shivratri festival in the month of Phalgan every year a great fair

in the direct line, and during his lifetime Kanwar Bhiwani Singh, born in 1885 to Khawasi Pardhano, of village Mehni in *ilaqa* Badar, had been recognised as heir-presumptive. The Kanwar had been sent for his education to the Aitchison Chiefs' College at Lahore.

Immediately after Bijai Sen's death Government was informed that one of his wives, the Datarpuri Rani, was *enciente*; and the question of succession had, therefore, to be held in abeyance. The Rani, however, gave birth to a daughter and Bhiwani Sen became Raja.

CHAPTER XIII.

RAJA BHIWANI SEN, 1903—1912.

KANWAR BHIWANI SEN was born in 1883. As heir-presumptive he was carefully brought up, and in 1898 sent to the Aitchison Chiefs' College for his education. Mr. E. M. Atkinson, the well-known Tennis player, was appointed Tutor, and Pandit Baini Madho, the son of Vaid Vidya Sagar, accompanied the Kanwar in the capacity of Religious Instructor and Sanskrit Teacher. At the Chief's College he made good progress. When the news of the death of his father reached him at Lahore, he immediately left for Mandi but as there were no motor cars running on the Mandi road in those days, he reached home on the third day. He fully expected to receive Raj Tilak after the obsequies of his father; but to his consternation he learnt that Rani Datarpur was expecting a child, and the succession depended upon the issue. He had, therefore, to possess his soul in patience; but Padha Jai Dev, the State Astronomer, predicted that the Rani would give birth to a daughter, and that the latter would die after a few days. Thus reassured Bhiwani Singh returned to the Chiefs' College. In due course the prophecy of the Padha was fulfilled; the Rani gave birth to a daughter, and there was no further obstacle in Bhiwani Singh's way. He was formally installed, as Raja Bhiwani Sen, by Sir Charles Rivaz, Lieutenant Governor, who specially came to Mandi to perform the ceremony in November 1903. The Installation Durbar was held in the open space in front of the Naya Mahal, but the Raj Tilak ceremony was, of course, performed in the Madho Rao Temple in the Damdamah. Just as, according to immemorial custom, the Maharana of Udepur gives Raj Tilak to the rulers of some Rajput States, similarly the Raja of Guler has the privilege of performing this ceremony for several Kangra hill chiefs. The Raja of Guler did come to Mandi for this purpose, but the Tilak ceremony was already over, and he was too late. A few chiefs had been invited to be present on the occasion, and for several days there were great rejoicings, feasting and merry-making.

The Raja Sahib was still a minor, and had not yet completed his education. Therefore, he had to remain at the Chiefs' College

His Highness Raja Bhiwani Sen Bahadur.
1903 to 1912.

for another five months. To put the administration on a sound footing before the Raja was invested with full powers, Mr. T. Millar of the Indian Civil Service was deputed to the State as Superintendent, and took over charge on the 30th of November 1903. The Raja left the Chiefs' College in March 1904, and after visiting Karachi and Bombay, by way of doing the 'grand tour,' he returned to Mandi to be trained in the work of administration by Mr. Millar.

THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1905.

Raja Bhiwani Sen and Mr. Millar had gone to see the Lidbari Fair, and had halted at the Palampur Dak-bungalow on their way back, when at about 6 in the morning of the 4th April 1905, a terrible earthquake shook the whole of the Kangra valley to its foundations. Both the Raja and Mr. Millar of them were buried underneath the debris, but thanks to the plucky conduct of one Habib, Darogha of the Stables, who did not lose his presence of mind, they were extricated with great difficulty. The welcome news of this providential escape was carried to Mandi by a special messenger. The havoc this upheaval wrought, the heavy toll of lives it took, the destruction of property it caused, and the misery and sorrow it entailed are all within living memory, and need not be dilated upon. Suffice it to say, that like other places in this area the Mandi state was prostrated. Hundreds of houses collapsed, and about 1,500 persons were killed. Many bridges gave way, and considerable damage was done to the roads. The total material loss sustained by the Mandi state was over 10 lacs of rupees. Relief was administered to the panic-stricken people promptly and most liberally. Small temporary huts and tents were raised for the homeless on the Padal, near Surah Kothi, and in the open space where the Kaisari Bag now stands. There was free distribution of grain, taqavi loans were granted to those who had lost whatever little they had, and timber was given away free from the Forest Depot, to enable people to rebuild their houses. The State did its best under the circumstances, but who can estimate the grief, the misery, the suffering which this dreadful visitation of nature caused?

THE TAZIA INCIDENT.

Some time before the earthquake, one Pir Bakhsh, a tailor from Tihri Garhwal had come to Mandi and settled down there. A day or two before the earthquake, under the advice and leadership of Pir Bakhsh his co-religionists brought out a Tazia in connection with Mohurrum for the first time in the history of Mandi. This was taken by the Hindus as an act of desecration and an insult to their deities.

and, therefore, to themselves and their town and State. Their point of view was that Mandi was essentially a Hindu State under the special patronage of the gods they worshipped, and they feared lest the latter might in their anger at the desecration destroy the people in some way or other. When the earthquake desolated Mandi, the Hindus attributed the calamity to the Tazia, and there was some fighting between them and the Moslems. The case came up before Mr. Millar and the Raja. The actual rioters were punished, and the quarrel patched up, the Muhammadans solemnly promising never to offend the susceptibilities of the Hindus.

THE INVESTURE 1905.

Having attained his majority Raja Bhiwani Sen was invested with full powers on the 7th of October, 1905. Mr. H. A. Anderson performed the ceremony on behalf of the Imperial Government.

The minority administration having come to an end, Mr. Millar left the state immediately after the investiture, and Padha Jiwa Nand was confirmed as Wazir by the Raja. The Padha was practically illiterate, and local tradition does not describe him as a particularly honest or efficient minister. He is said to have been entirely under the thumb of his Munshi, Parshotam.

When their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales (now our King Emperor and Queen Empress) visited Lahore in November 1905, all the Punjab Chiefs and other notables and dignitaries were invited to have the honour of meeting their Royal Highnesses. Raja Bhiwani Sen was one of them. Shortly afterwards Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief, toured from Simla to Kangra, and passed through Mandi territory. The Durbar had made excellent arrangements for him, and he was highly pleased with them.

NEW BUILDINGS.

Raja Bhiwani Sen was very fond of building new buildings. The beautiful Durbar Hall was built in 1906 at a cost of Rs. 30,000/- and in 1907 an electrical plant was installed near Bhiwani Niwas at a cost of Rs. 20,000/-. The Raja ordered Bhiwani Niwas to be built for his own residence; but unfortunately the building was completed after his death.

Repairs were carried out to several temples and buildings which had been neglected for sometime past.

A serious agrarian disturbance, a rather unique one of its kind, and therefore worthy of a detailed account, broke out in the beginning of 1909.*

Careful inquiry has revealed the fact that the chief cause of the rising was grievous discontent with Upadha Jiwa Nand's administration. The agriculturists had been nursing some minor grievances for some time; and failures of crops had produced the necessary inflammable conditions. It appears that in this time of scarcity, and the general agrarian discontent that was smouldering, Jiwa Nand was not at all sympathetic towards the people. On the contrary he was guilty of a few very indiscreet and reprehensible acts. For instance, on one occasion he granted remission of one rupee from the land-revenue to each cultivator of land, and wanted the latter to bring one rupee worth of rice which he said was wanted by the Sarkar for purposes of charity. At that time rice was selling at about 5½ seers a rupee, but the Upadha made the zemindars sell it to him at 11 seers. Having collected as large a quantity of rice as he could, he proceeded to exploit the needs of the poor people by selling it at exhorbitant rates thus making a huge profit for himself. He had also taken contracts for building roads, and it was an open secret that he had made more than 70,000 rupees out of these shady transactions. The system of *Begar* always odious, had become particularly obnoxious at this time, and was pitilessly enforced, even at the time when the peasant is very busy on his own land, on behalf not only of the Raja and the officials, but anybody and every body. In Harrison's time acquisition of land by officials had been forbidden by the Raja as it lent itself to injustice and oppression, but Jiwa Nand and his satellites acquired plenty of land in open defiance of this regulation. Such unscrupulous conduct was bound to lead to trouble; but it seems Jiwa Nand had become power-mad, and having lost his bearings his finger was no longer on the pulse of the people. His subordinates naturally imitated the Wazir, and bribery and corruption were rife at the court of the Raja. All sorts of ridiculous sinecures had been created for the benefit of Jiwa Nand's relatives and friends; for instance, a man had been appointed for the sole purpose of counting the number of guns per

*It seems to have been an altogether remarkable occurrence and the author took particular pains to meet people who were either actors in the grim drama or who saw everything with their own eyes. Sobha Ram, the ringleader of the rising gave the author the benefit of a long talk, and Padha Jai Dev, who was one of the principal advisers of Raja Bhiwani Sen at that time, gave a very graphic description of the disturbance.

minute fired on important occasions. The Upadha's own brother Bali Ram was Commander of the State Forces, and between them the two brothers had monopolised the whole power. Rumblings had been heard; but Jiwa Nand would not allow any one to gain access to the Raja. Petition after petition was made to the Ruler by the suffering people, but none reached him. Thus the Raja lost that touch with his people which is so essential in a benevolent autocracy. The smouldering fire burst into a flame when a suitable leader was found in the person of Sobha Ram, son of Gur Dhian Kanet, of village Gadhiani in the Sarkaghat Tehsil. This man had some personal grievances; but these he merged into the general ones. He chalked out systematic plan of agitation, which according to his lights he considered constitutional. At first he brought 20 men with him to Mandi, and applied to the Raja for an interview with a view to placing their grievances before him, but no one would listen to him. A second and a third attempt were made, with 40 and 300 men respectively, to gain access to the Raja, but in vain. A few zemindars were arrested as the result of this agitation, and Sobha Ram sent repeated telegrams to the Lieutenant-Governor and the Governor-General beseeching them to intervene; but no notice was taken of these frantic appeals. Then Sobha Ram decided to make a grand demonstration, and under his leadership about 20,000 agitators collected at Mandi, but it is remarkable that no excesses of any sort were committed. Indeed, the agitators openly declared that they had no grievance against the Raja Sahib in person; but their sole aim was to save him and the State from the Wazir and his confederates. Raja Bhiwani Sen seemed to have realised the justice of some of the points made by the agitators, but he could not make up his mind to get rid of Rai Bahadur Jiwa Nand, who was believed to have great influence with the Government, and whose dismissal would be thought, be resented by the latter. While the Raja was still wavering, the agitators arrested two officials named Hardev Singh, Tehsildar, and Miri Naigi; and taking possession of the jail thrust them into it; but when the Raja appeared among the agitators in person to listen to their grievances the arrested officials were let off. At this juncture Sobha Ram seems to have become a very powerful personage, and there is a saying in Mandi which speaks for itself as to the true state of affairs at the time "

د وهی بهوانی سینے دے – حکم سوبها رامے دا

(Sovereignty belongs to Raja Bhiwani Sen, but Sobha Ram rules the State.)

At last when the agitators, getting tired and impatient of delay laid their hands upon Jiwa Nand and a few other important officials, the Raja wired to the Government for help. The Deputy Commissioner of Kangra and the Assistant Commissioner of Kullu hasten-

ed to Mandi, and a few days latter arrived Colonel H. S. Daires, the Commissioner of Jullundur Division. Two companies of the 32nd Pioneers were requisitioned; but all this show of force seems to have been unnecessary as the agitators never intended to, nor did they, during their 15 days stay at Mandi, indulge in any rioting, arson, or plundering. However, after eight days' enquiry a big durbar was held at the Padal Maidan where the Raja received nazars from and the homage of no less than 6,000 of his subjects. Padha Jiwa Nand was dismissed and Indar Singh, son of the late Wazir Uttam Singh, was appointed Wazir. Their principal point gained, the agitators dispersed quietly after the Durbar. Some of the ringleaders were suitably punished.

Shortly afterwards Tikka Rajendra Pal, E.A.C., the son of the Raja of Kutlehr, was appointed Adviser to Raja Bhiwani Sen, and Munshi Amar Singh as acting Wazir. Tikka Rajendra Pal proved to be a strong and tactful officer and handled the situation after the disturbance very successfully. The disturbance had at least one salutary effect: it focussed attention on the festering sores of the administration; and every effort was now made by the Raja and his Adviser to cure these evils and introduce reforms.

ANOTHER DISTURBANCE.

When Tikka Rajendra Pal was Adviser there was another small disturbance at Dodah jungle (in Balh) under the leadership of Sidhu Kharwara. The agitators had some minor grievances, relating to land and forest administration, and thought that by resorting to 'direct action' they would draw the attention of the Durbar to them. Tikka Rajendra Pal proceeded to the spot in person, and the rabble dispersed. A few rustic bandsmen were caught, but as their services had been requisitioned by the agitators under coercion, they were let off. After investigation a few culprits were awarded suitable punishment. Sidhu fled and took refuge in the house of Mian Bhupa at Maniana (Hamirpur Tehsil); but was caught later on in Mr. Emerson's time in connection with the Conspiracy case and sentenced to 7 years' rigorous imprisonment.

REGULAR SETTLEMENT BEGINS 1911.

After this the Raja considered it advisable to ask for the services of a European Officer of the Indian Civil Service who should help him in eradicating the existing defects in the administration. The root cause of discontent and agitation lay in the obsolete and uneven

system of land revenue and *begar*, and a settlement of land on modern lines was decided upon. In 1911 Mr. C. C. Garbett was deputed to Mandi as Settlement Officer and General Adviser, and undertook his new duties with enthusiasm. But before he could accomplish his task he fell seriously ill and had to proceed home on long leave in October 1911.

THE KAMRU NAG INCIDENT.

One event is mentioned in connection with Mr. Garbett's period of office in Mandi. There is a temple and tank dedicated to Kamru Nag in the Chichiot Tehsil. This hill deity is believed to b very exclusive, and no Sudra is permitted to approach his tank and shrine. Pilgrims throw silver coins and ornaments into the tank as offerings, but the copper coins are appropriated by the Pujaris. It is believed by the people that a large amount of silver has accumulated in the tank. In the course of his tour Mr. Garbett got to know about it, and desired to put the supposed treasure to some use by taking it out of the tank after drying it up. He made the suggestion to the Raja and asked him to visit the place and decide for himself. The proposal was opposed tooth and nail by the Pujaris and the worshippers of Kamru Nag. On the way it rained very heavily, and the Raja and Mr. Garbett had to stop at Chichiot. It is said that Mr. Garbett took some wild hill fruit which brought on a severe attack of dysentry necessitating his taking leave. Ignorant and superstitious people ascribed the heavy rain and his illness to the wrath of the deity.

Mr. Garbett was succeeded by Mr. Gordon Walker, I.C.S., with Mehta Ganda Mull, E.A.C., as his assistant.

THE MARRIAGES OF RAJA BHIWANI SEN.

The first marriage of Raja Bhiwani Sen had taken place during the life-time of Raja Bijai Sen. He was married to two daughters of Mian Surat Singh of Suket. One of the brides died soon afterwards; the other is still alive.

The second marriage of the Raja was celebrated in 1907, unfortunately there was no male issue.

MIAN PREM SINGH, KISHEN SINGH AND GANGA SINGH.

The prominent kinsmen to whom the Raja was much attached were Mians Prem Singh, Kishen Singh and Ganga Singh. Mian

Prem Singh was put in charge of the State forests, but he met with a fatal accident while crossing the *nala* near the Ganpati Temple. When his wife got the news she committed suicide by jumping down from her house at Chichiot. Mian Kishen Singh, the father of the present ruler, was the son of Mian Man Singh. The Raja was very fond of this estimable man who was very pious and very popular among the people.

He had been made Commander of the State forces. His great love for, and loyalty to, the Raja is still remembered by the people.

DEATH OF RAJA BHIWANI SEN.

Raja Bhiwani Sen attended the great Imperial Durbar held by the King Emperor at Delhi in December 1911. Soon after his return from Delhi a fatal malady took hold of him. In spite of the best efforts of *vaids* and doctors, specially called from the Punjab, he succumbed on the 9th February, 1912. He was not even 29 years of age, and his extremely sad and untimely death plunged his subjects into grief and sorrow and cast a shadow of gloom all over the State.

CHAPTER XIV.

HIS HIGHNESS RAJA JOGENDRA SEN.

RAJA Bhiwani Sen having died without male issue it became necessary for the Government to select a successor. Eventually it was decided to elevate Mian Jogendra Singh, the son of the late Mian Kishen Singh, and the nearest male relative to the gaddi. The necessary ceremony of adoption was gone through, and the young prince was adopted by Rani Khairgarhi.

Mian Jogendra Singh was formally installed Raja of Mandi in a Durbar held on the 28th April, 1913, by Sir Louis Dane, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who was accompanied by Mr. P. J. Fagan, I.C.S. Born on the 19th August, 1904, the new ruler was only 8½ years old, and a long minority administration was inevitable. Mr. A. L. Gordon Walker, I.C.S., was appointed Superintendent of the State, responsible to the Commissioner, Jullundur Division.

Raja Jogendra Sen was admitted to the Queen Mary's College, Lahore, in April 1913, and the Dei Sahiba Dhanwanti, aged 8, daughter of the late Raja, entered the college at the same time. From the very beginning the Raja Sahib showed himself to be exceptionally intelligent and quick at his work, and throughout his stay at the Queen Mary's College he was well reported upon as an exceedingly nice and well-behaved child. Very early he showed special aptitude for drawing and singing, and the latter explains his present taste for music: Indian and European. He also took very keen pleasure in football, cricket, bicycling, and other out-door games and sports: an interest which was maintained later on at the Chiefs' College, and enthusiastically kept up to the present day.

Ill-health compelled Mr. Gordon Walker to go on leave for three months, and Mr. C. F. Strickland, I.C.S., officiated for him from January to March 1914. With the appointment of a Superintendent, who was also the Settlement Officer, the post of Wazir was abolished, and Munshi Amar Singh, the former Wazir, was appoint-

ed Assistant Superintendent. Babu Sri Gopal, an old servant of the State, was appointed Sub-divisional Officer for Harabag Sub-division including all the Wazirs on the right bank of the Beas. The rest of the State was divided into two tehsils: the Sadar Tehsil including the Wazirs of Hatli, Anantpur, Suranga, Kamlah, Tungal and Pachit; and the Chichiot Tehsil consisting of the Waziris of Siraj, Nachan, Pandoh and Balh.

Colonel Popham Young, the officiating Commissioner, Jullundur, visited the State in September 1913, and fixed cash allowances on a fairly liberal scale for the members of the late Raja's household. Mian Ganga Singh, grandson of Raja Zalim Sen, and one of the claimants to the gaddi received a large advance of money to meet certain financial difficulties.

REFORMS (1913-14).

Shooting rules were introduced in the State (during 1913-14) to prevent the indiscriminate destruction of game that had been going on for a long time.

Fishing rules were also issued under the advice of Mr. G. C. L. Howell, Director of Fisheries, Punjab, requiring all fishermen to obtain licenses on payment of a small fee; and destruction of fish by poison was penalised.

Begar was abolished in the Harabag Sub-division so far as traffic along the high-road was concerned.

A very needful reform was brought about enabling a girl over sixteen to refuse marriage to which she was averse. (This age limit was reduced to 14 the following year). Wherever possible Urdu was made the official language for the offices and courts.

A start was made, under the new scheme, to widen the Baijnath-Mandi road.

A Veterinary Hospital was built near the State-stables.

A Municipal Committee had been created for the Mandi town in 1910-11; but in a very humble form, and no good work had been done. It was reorganised in 1914, and put on a proper basis with 12 selected members representing the various castes in the city.

MR. H. W. EMERSON, AS SUPERINTENDENT.

In March 1915, Mr. H. W. Emerson, I.C.S., joined the State as Superintendent; Munshi Amar Singh having officiated since Mr. Strickland's departure in March 1914.

Mr. H. J. Maynard, I.C.S., Commissioner and Superintendent, Jullundur Division, visited the State in October 1914: 26 years after he had worked as Adviser to Raja Bijai Sen. He inspected the State Courts and some of the State schools, and also held a public Darbar in which he addressed the assembly on the relations that should exist between a Raja and his subjects.

SOCIAL REFORM 1914-15.

Mr. Emerson formed a committee of the people of Mandi to consider and regulate marriage and death expenses and to make certain other reforms. Rules were framed and printed and distributed to the people for guidance. For a short while the people evinced some interest in the matter, but soon relapsed into their old ways.

CHANGE IN BOUNDARIES.

The ilaqa of Hatli, Baira, Bagra, and Hatgarh were transferred from the Chichiot to the Sadar Tehsil in order to equalise the distribution of work between the two officers concerned.

OTHER CHANGES AND REFORMS.

The Anglo-Vernacular Middle School Building at Mandi was raised to a double storey at a cost of Rs. 10.000/- and seven new schools were opened at Drang, Gumma, Bhangrotu, Kandholi, Dharampur, Tehra and Kataula, increasing the number of rural schools to 18.

The Durbar applied for the services of a British officer to be in charge of the State forests, and Mr. H. L. Wright, Assistant Conservator of Forests, was deputed to the State in May 1914. After touring through part of the more valuable forests he submitted a report suggesting that the forest should be properly demarcated, surveyed and settled, and that a working plan should be made for the more valuable coniferous forests. Mr. Wright remained on deputation at Mandi up till November 1917, and during this time he did most valuable work in carrying out a Forest settlement, and a working plan for the future exploitation of the State forests

Mr. Emerson was absent from the State from September 1915 to January 1916 during which time Mr. H. Fyson, Assistant Commissioner, Kullu, officiated as Superintendent. Munshi Amar Singh also proceeded on leave in January 1916 before reversion to government service, and Mehta Ganda Mall, the Assistant Settlement Officer, was appointed in his place as Assistant Superintendent.

DESTRUCTION OF COURTS AND OFFICES BY FIRE, 1916.

The most important and yet the most lamentable event of the year was the destruction of several of the State Courts and Offices by a devastating fire which broke out on the night of the 10th January, 1916. Although the material loss was considerable, and almost all the files were lost, an irreparable loss to the historian, "the fire", according to Mr. Emerson, "was not an unmixed evil". "The destruction of files", he wrote, "will cause little inconvenience to suitors, and will prevent the revival of old disputes on frivolous grounds to which the people of Mandi are particularly prone. The thorough investigation which followed the fire revealed certain defects in the past administration which might otherwise have escaped detection; and in particular it enabled the Superintendent to break up a gang of corrupt subordinates whose habit it has been to assist their friends and relations by the deliberate suppression of files.

HIS HIGHNESS AT THE AITCHISON CHIEFS' COLLEGE, LAHORE.

In October 1916 His Highness the Raja Sahib joined the Aitchison Chiefs' College, Lahore, as a day-boarder with Mr. T. P. Gillmore as Tutor. At this College, the Raja Sahib won the golden opinions of his Principal and Teachers, and one of the latter told the present writer that throughout his stay there the young Raja was considered a model student in every respect. He showed himself as keen on his studies as on games and sports, and by his exemplary behaviour and unexceptionable conduct he kept up the best traditions of his alma-mater. His grounding at the Queen Mary's College had been excellent, and his development at the Chiefs' College was rapid and remarkable.

VISIT OF THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR, 1916.

In October 1916 H. H. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant-Governor, visited the State staying for one day at Kataula and three days at Mandi. His Honour accorded interviews to the two Ranis of the late Raja, to the prominent Mians, and to leading offi-

cials and gentlemen. The affairs of the State were discussed with the Commissioner and Superintendent, and several outstanding questions of importance connected with the Land Settlement were satisfactorily settled.

ABOLITION OF "BEGAR."

In connection with the introduction of the new settlement *pola begar* was abolished with effect from 1st January, 1917; and at the same time a system of payment was introduced for all casual *begar* except the very minor services rendered in connection with the camps of officials. The State had in the past, been so dependent on *begar*, and the ramifications of the system were so many that the transformation to paid labour involved considerable forethought and administrative arrangement. To every one's surprise the change was made without a hitch. Members of the Ruling Family and others in enjoyment of the services of *begaris* were adequately compensated for their withdrawl; the supply of wood and charcoal, which formerly required a large number of *begaris*, was undertaken by the Forest Department; provision of grass for the stables was secured by improved organisation and increase of the number of paid servants; the multifarious requirements of the *Haremserai* were provided for by adapting the existing system to the changed conditions; and a permanent supply of coolies at Sadar and the chief stages in the State, was furnished by the establishment of public works gangs.

The abolition of *begar* necessitated a revision of the pay of subordinate servants, many of whom had been content to work on small wages, in consideration of exemption from this burden. The extra cost to the State, consequent on the abolition of *begar*, was about Rs. 22,500.

The abolition of *begar* in the Mandi State stands as a lasting monument to Mr. Emerson.

THE MANDI CONSPIRACY CASE.

What is known as Mandi Conspiracy Case was a legacy from the unrest prevailing in the Punjab and elsewhere during 1914 and 1915. The C. I. D., during their investigation in the Punjab Conspiracy, obtained information which indicated that certain conspirators had been active in Mandi. The clue was followed up, and it was discovered that from December 1914 to about June 1915 an active conspiracy was carried on having as its object the murder of the Super-

intendent, the Assistant Superintendent and other officials; the looting of the State Treasury; the seizure of the State, and the despatch of assistance in men, money or arms to the Punjab groups. Five men were arrested and tried. Mian Jawahar Singh, the leading Mandi conspirator, was sentenced to transportation for life, and the others to terms of imprisonment varying from 14 years to 18 months.

MR. EMERSON'S DEPARTURE, JUNE 1917.

Mr. Emerson left the State in June 1917 being succeeded by Mr. J. R. S. Parsons, I.C.S. During his tenure of office at Mandi Mr. Emerson worked with a most commendable zeal and devotion to duty, and left his mark on every branch of the administration. The Regular Settlement had been completed, and to Mr. Emerson is due most of the credit for that great work. In addition to making the revenue assessments he prepared two reports on general questions connected with the settlement, which laid the foundation for the reorganisation of the State revenue system on sound lines. He also prepared a *Wajib-ul-arz* which safeguarded the rights and interests of both the State and the land-holders.

THE RAJA ATTENDS THE VICEREGAL DURBAR AT LAHORE.

On the occasion of the Viceregal visit to Lahore in April 1917, Mian Ganga Singh, member of the Advisory Council, Mehta Ganda Mal, Assistant Superintendent, L. Sri Gopal and Subedar Raghunath Singh were in attendance on His Highness; and Mr. Parsons acted as special Political Officer for the State. The Raja paid an official visit to Lord Chelmsford and had the honour of receiving a return visit. At all these functions His Highness displayed a dignity and self-possession remarkable for one so young; and created a most favourable impression.

MR. PARSON'S ADMINISTRATION.

Mr. Parsons carried out the reorganisation of certain departments such as the Secretariat, the P.W.D., Police and Education and put them on more systematic and up-to-date lines.

The new Sarka Ghat Tehsil was constituted by division of the Sadar Tehsil into two. The headquarters were fixed at Sarka Ghat in the centre of the western assessment circle. Slight modifications were also made in the boundaries of the Harabag, Sadar and Chichiot Tehsils.

Certain tolls and taxes, such as tolls on the Kanda Ferry and on the Khokhna Bridge near Pandoh; the grazing tax levied from travellers on beasts of burden, were abolished in 1917-18 as they produced very little and were rather vexatious. Steps were also taken to abolish the system of levying zakat (octroi) on goods brought into Mandi town.

PROGRESS OF HIS HIGHNESS' EDUCATION.

The Raja Sahib continued his studies at the Chiefs' College, and excellent reports were received about his progress. His bright intellect and loveable disposition greatly impressed all those with whom he was brought into contact. In order that His Highness' religious education might not be neglected, Pandit Brij Behari Lal, B.A., Shastri, was appointed Religious Instructor in 1918. The Pandit fully justified his selection and his influence over the Raja was all to the good.

Mr. C. A. Barron, Commissioner of Jullundur Division, paid a visit to the State in September 1918. He stayed at Jhatingri with His Highness.

TWO SAD DEATHS!

In September 1918 the State was thrown into mourning by the sad death of Sahibini Sahiba Datarpuri, a widow of Raja Bijai Sen.

In the summer of 1918 Vidya Sagar, the popular and high-souled Vaid, died of cholera and his death was universally mourned in the State. He was not only a very able Vaid, but as a man he was loved and respected by all.

MARRIAGE OF DEI SAHIBA.

Dei Sahiba Dhanwanti was betrothed on 27th Sawan 1976 (1919 A.D.) to Kanwar Shiv Pal, grandson of Raja Ram Pal Sahib of Kutlehr. The marriage was solemnized on 2nd Phagan, and as a spectacle will long be remembered by the people of Mandi. The wedding party consisted of about 400 persons, including the Raja of Salaugri, and were accommodated in a spacious and well-laid out camp on the Pandal Maidan which was lighted by electricity for the occasion.

CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

On the expiry of his period of deputation Mehta Ganda Mal left the State in July 1919, and was succeeded as Assistant Superintendent by Pandit Maharaj Kishen, a Tehsildar deputed from the Punjab.

During his eight years' service in the Mandi State, Mehta Ganda Mal had worked hard and conscientiously, and his integrity and knowledge of revenue administration were invaluable assets to the Durbar during the settlement work.

LAW AND ORDER.

During the Punjab disturbances (in April 1919) a proclamation was issued to the people of Mandi for the prevention of damage to State property and the arrest of any suspicious persons. A small Gurkha detachment with one British Officer was detailed from Dharmsala and stationed at Mandi for a month. As a precautionary measure the main roads were patrolled by the State Cavalry and some extra-police was enrolled.

PEACE CELEBRATIONS AND WAR SERVICES.

Peace celebrations were observed throughout the State by people of all classes and creeds on the dates fixed for the purpose.

His Highness received a *Kharita* from His Excellency the Viceroy conveying the thanks of His Majesty the King Emperor for the staunch support rendered by the Mandi Durbar during the Great War. Throughout that titantic struggle Mandi had worthily done its bit for the Empire. The State gave 1124 recruits to the Indian Army and also gave away large grants in good land to its subjects in order to encourage them to take up arms in the righteous struggle in which Great Britain was engaged. Indeed, so extensive were these grants that hardly any good land was left in the State to be given away as a reward in the future. In addition to this enormous sacrifice the State gave 60,000 rupees worth of gifts, and over six lacs was contributed to the War Loans. Thus did Mandi keep up its traditions of loyalty and devotion to the Crown.

VISIT OF HIS EXCELLENCY SIR EDWARD MACLAGAN.

His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab, on his way to Suket for the installation of the Raja of Suket, made a brief halt at

Mandi on the 29th March 1920, and granted interviews to the leading Mians, and also to the ladies of the Harem.

MR. PARSON'S DEPARTURE.

In May 1920 Mr. Parsons proceeded home on long leave and Pandit Maharaj Kishen was appointed to officiate as Superintendent with Lala Sri Gopal as Assistant. On his return from Europe Mr. Parsons succumbed to a serious illness while he was trying the Nankana Sahib Case at Lahore. As Superintendent of the Mandi State he had done extremely good work in building up the administration on sound lines after the conclusion of the settlement. His sudden and untimely death came as a great shock to his many friends and admirers in Mandi.

HIS HIGHNESS ATTENDS TWO DURBARS, 1921.

On the 8th of January, 1921, the Raja Sahib attended the Provincial Durbar held at Lahore. Official visits were exchanged between him and His Excellency the Governor.

When His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught visited Delhi in February 1921, the Raja Sahib attended the functions connected with the Durbar, and again produced a very good impression on all high officials of Government as well as on his brother Princes.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

At the close of the year 1921 the Sadar School was raised to the high standard and the staff suitably strengthened. The total number of the scholars in the State that year was 1146.

DIRECT POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

In pursuance of the recommendations made in the Montague-Chelmsford Report, that the more important Indian States should be placed in direct political relationship with the Government of India, the Mandi State together with twelve other Salute States was placed in such relationship through an Agent to the Governor-General for Punjab States. Lieutenant-Colonel A. B. Minchin was the first Political Officer to fill this important post, and assumed charge of his duties in November 1921. He paid his first visit to Mandi towards the close of the year 1921-1922. He inspected the various offices and granted interviews to the ladies of the harem, and the prominent Mians and officials of the State. While inspecting the

State Forces he made the welcome announcement of a rise in the scale of their pay.

THE DELHI DURBAR, 1922.

The Raja Sahib attended the functions connected with the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales at Delhi and Lahore in 1922, and came in contact with many illustrious personages.

DEATH OF DEI SAHIBA, SEPTEMBER 1921.

The State was thrown into mourning by the sad and untimely death of Dei Sahiba Dhanwanti who breathed her last on the 6th September, 1921, at Lyallpur. She had hardly been married two years when the cruel hand of death snatched her away. She was a lady of many accomplishments, and His Highness, who had loved her like his own sister, deeply mourned her loss.

HIS HIGHNESS STUDIED FOR HIS DIPLOMA.

The Raja Sahib continued to make rapid progress in his studies at the Aitchison Chiefs' College, and was reading for his diploma in 1922. In December 1922 the services of Mr. Gillmore as Tutor were terminated.* And Pt. Avatar Kishen Kaul, P.C.S., was appointed to succeed him. The idea was that the new tutor, by virtue of his judicial, executive and revenue experience, would be able to train His Highness in these branches of administration.

HIS HIGHNESS' BETROTHEL AND MARRIAGE, 1922-23.

Having reached the age of 19, proposals for the Raja Sahib's marriage were set afoot by the ladies of the Harem, and his relatives. He had been betrothed to the Dei Sahiba of Deloth, but as she was too young the Raja Sahib was not inclined to view the alliance with favour. The Advisory Council, therefore, cancelled the previous engagement, and negotiations were opened for an alliance with Maharaj Kumari Amrit Kaur, the only daughter of His Highness the Maharaja of Kapurthala. The latter having signified his consent the engagement was ratified with due ceremony, and the wedding fixed for February 1923.

* Mr. Gillmore was tutor to H. H. from 1916—1922 and discharged his duties very conscientiously and satisfactorily.

Grand preparations were made for the marriage. His Highness arrived in Mandi in the middle of January 1923 to perform the ceremonies. He was given a most hearty and enthusiastic welcome by his subjects who had congregated in thousands to exhibit their joy and love for their Ruler by joining in the festivities. Day and night groups of village-men and women, dressed in their best and most picturesque garbs were seen moving about the streets singing felicitous songs. Feasts, processions and entertainments alternated with religious ceremonies and the necessary visits to the sacred temples. The tide of festivities reached the highest water-mark during the few days preceding the departure of the marriage party for Kapurthala. In glittering and gorgeous costumes the *Barat* boarded the special train, decorated galore with flowers and garlands, at Pathankote on the 4th of February, 1923, and arrived at Kapurthala the same day. *En-route* His Highness was entertained by Rai Bahadur Pandit Hari Kishen Kaul, C.I.E., C.S.I., Commissioner of Jullundur, who also joined the marriage party. At the Kapurthala Railway Station, the Raja Sahib was received by the Tikka Raja Sahib, Maharaj Kumars Mahijit Singh and Karmjit Singh of Kapurthala. His Highness was also met there by Colonel Minchin, the A.-G.-G., who had arrived at Kapurthala to join the party. A magnificent procession was formed, the Raja Sahib and Colonel Minchin taking their seats on the first elephant which was gorgeously caprisoned.

The marriage ceremony was performed on the 5th of February at the Jalao Khana. His Excellency Sir Edward MacLagan and Lady MacLagan, Colonel and Mrs. Minchin, and other distinguished guests were present to witness the auspicious ceremony.

The guests were entertained with the lavish hospitality for which Kapurthala is so famous, and there was a round of the most sumptuous feasts, gorgeous banquets, garden parties, fireworks and other displays and entertainments.

The 23rd of March witnessed the State entry of Their Highnesses into Mandi. To greet them arches of welcome had been erected at Ghatta boundary and several other places, and thousands of people from the *ilaqa* had gathered on the road-side to offer their *Jai Deya* to their Ruler. The whole length of the road, right up to Mandi, about 50 miles, was one continuous row of men, women and children who showered flowers on the Raja and the Rani, and sang songs of joy and congratulations.

The Capital was befittingly decked out, and the enthusiastic welcome that Their Highnesses received will be remembered for a

long time. There were feastings, illuminations, fireworks and other displays and entertainments the like of which had never been witnessed by the people of Mandi. Colonel Minchin and His Highness the Raja of Suket were the principal guests.

THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT.

During 1922-23 the Hydro-Electric Survey Department carried out a survey of the Uhl Valley. Colonel B. C. Battye visited the State and personally discussed the *pros* and *cons* of the gigantic scheme with the Mandi Durbar with a view to settling the terms on which the latter would agree to allow the waters of the Uhl river to be harnessed, and afford other facilities. In consultation with the A.-G.-G. a draft agreement was drawn up. The scheme as proposed was to have three stages of development, and was calculated eventually to yield 2½ lakh kilowatts of power: enough to supply all the cities in the Punjab and Delhi Provinces.

RE-ORGANISATION OF STATE FORCES.

As advised by the Government of India the State invited Major General Sir Harry D. Watson, Military Advisor-in-Chief, Indian States Forces, to advise the Durbar on the question of reorganisation of the Mandi State Forces. Accordingly, Sir Harry visited the State in April 1923, and drew up a scheme involving an expenditure of about Rs. 44,000 over the maintenance of 3 infantry platoons, one of "Palace Guards" and half a troop of cavalry, and a band. Reorganisation on these lines was eventually carried out and both the units were named after His Highness, viz., the Jogindra Infantry and the Jogendra Lancers.

JUDICIAL AND REVENUE TRAINING OF HIS HIGHNESS.

The Raja Sahib left the Chiefs' College and commenced his Judicial and Revenue training in 1923. Mr. H. W. Emerson, Deputy Commissioner of Lahore and sometime Superintendent of the Mandi State, gave every facility in His Highness' training in civil, criminal and revenue case work. With his usual intelligence and alertness of mind the Raja Sahib picked up the work very quickly.

THE BIRTH OF UVRAJ.

The 7th of December, 1923 will always remain a red-letter day in the history of Mandi, for it witnessed the birth of a son and

heir to Their Highnesses. For about a century it had not been given to the rulers of Mandi to welcome the birth of a son in the direct male line, and the auspicious birth of the Uvraj was hailed as a great event all over the State, and there were universal rejoicings.

The *namkaran* ceremony was performed with great *eclat* and the heir-apparent was named Yashodhan Singh.

THEIR HIGHNESSES' VISIT TO EUROPE.

Their Highnesses accompanied by Thakar Nihal Singh, a cousin of the Raja Sahib, and Kanwar Shiv Pal left Bombay for Europe on 9th May, 1924. This was His Highness' first visit to the West, and the first in the whole history of Mandi Raj. At Marseilles His Highness was joined by Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie, I.C.S., as Adviser. In Paris, a grand garden party was given in honour of his son-in-law and daughter by His Highness the Maharaja of Kapurthala to which the *elite* of Parisian society were invited. While in Paris the Raja Sahib met the Prince of Siam, the British Ambassador Lord Crew, the Shah of Persia, and Princess Fewkie of Egypt. From Paris the party moved on to London where Major Toulmin, a retired officer of U. P. Police, joined as Adviser owing to Mr. Ogilvie's indifferent health. Their Majesties the King Emperor and the Queen Empress very graciously granted an audience to Their Highnesses; and later on the latter attended the Royal Court where the Raja Sahib had the signal honour of standing on the Royal Dais with His Majesty. Their Highnesses also attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace. They had also the pleasure of meeting H. R. H. the Duke of York, His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, Sir George and Lady Lloyd and several other exalted personages.

The motor-tour through the historic battle-fields of Somme and Verdun proved most interesting and instructive, and enabled His Highness as a soldier, to pay his homage to the last resting places of those heroes who had sacrificed their lives so cheerfully at the altar of truth, justice and liberty.

Through the north of France the party proceeded to Belgium visiting, *en-route,* the beautiful and interesting towns of Dinnant, Spa, Cologne, Coblentez and Luxemberg. Then Their Highnesses went on to Zurich, and touring through the fascinating scenes of the Alpine range crossed the frontier into Italy. Rome, Venice and Florence were duly visited, and their ever-present enchantments did not fail to wield their magic wand over Their Highnesses. After

PRINCE YASODHAN SINGH, HEIR APPARENT.

paying brief visits to Vienna, Budapest, Berne, Laussane and Geneva, the party sailed from Marseilles on the 10th October, 1924.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES.

Pandit Avatar Kishen Kaul reverted to the Punjab Government service on the 1st of April, 1924 on the termination of his deputation. As Tutor to the Raja Sahib, he proved extremely helpful, and succeeded in winning the latter's lasting esteem and affection.

Pandit Maharaj Kishen, M.B.E., was relieved of his duties as Superintendent by Sardar Dina Nath, Bar-at-Law, on the 9th of July, 1924. Lala Sri Gopal retired from service, after having served the State to the best of his ability for about 40 years, and the post of Assistant Superintendent was abolished. The post of Chief Judge was created and Pandit Kanwar Narain, Bar-at-Law, was appointed to it. The Revenue Assistant was designated Revenue Secretary, and Bakshi Brahm Das, who had rendered meritorious services during the settlement and thereafter, was raised to the latter post.

The powers of all the executive officers were revised and enhanced with a view to removing the evils of over-centralisation, and also with the object of inculcating in them a higher sense of responsibility.

THE TERMINATION OF THE MINORITY ADMINISTRATION.

While he was in Europe the date of His Highness' investiture with full powers had been fixed for the 13th February, 1925. The long period of minority—1913-1925—was now coming to a close, and the people of Mandi were eagerly looking forward to the day when their beloved Ruler would take the reins of administration in his own hands.

During the minority, the administration had been in the hands of several able officers each one of whom tried to do his best for the State. During the twelve years before the Investiture the moral and material progress of the State had been remarkable. The opening balance for the year 1912-13 was Rs. 1,45,714; the closing balance of the year 1923-24 was Rs. 10,94,886. The most noteworthy improvements during the minority were:—

1. Land Revenue Settlement.

2. Forest Settlement.

3. A thorough overhauling and reorganisation of the various branches of administration, *e.g.*, Judicial, P.W.D., Medical, Army, Police, Salt, Education, Veterinary and Agriculture.

In many ways had Mandi progressed and developed, and in spite of the fact that the various improvements had entailed very heavy expenditure—as had also the several betrothals and marriages in the Raj family—the State was on the whole in a more prosperous condition in 1925 than it had ever been before.

All honour to those who laboured hard and selflessly for the good of the State during the twelve years' minority administration including the strenuous years of the Great War when all its energies were cheerfully taxed to the uttermost.

THE INVESTITURE, FEBRUARY 1925.

Soon after his return from Europe, and before the Investiture, the Raja Sahib proceeded to Calcutta for military training with the 3/17th Dogras, the Regiment of his choice, stationed at Alipur.

As might be expected grand preparations had been made in anticipation of the auspicious day of the investiture, and Sardar Dina Nath, the Superintendent, and his colleagues had laboured very hard to make the event a great success. His Highness returned to Mandi on the 6th February after 9 months' absence, and his safe arrival home was marked by scenes of immense public rejoicings.

The guests had all assembled at the Capital by the 12th of February, the last to arrive being Colonel A. B. Minchin, A.G.G. Punjab States, deputed by His Excellency the Viceroy to invest His Highness with full ruling powers. Among the guests were Maharaj Kumar Karamjit Singh of Kapurthala, Mr. and Mrs. Kelly, Dr. and Madame Roth, Rai Bahadur Diwan Gayan Nath, Major A. M. Arnott, Kanwar Shiv Pal, Mr. Wadia, Miss Wadia, Major and Mrs. Chesney and others.

After the usual preliminary exchange of visits between His Highness and the A.G.G., and the performance of *poojah* and at the Family Temple etc., the investiture ceremony was perfomed at the

magnificent Durbar Hall at 10-15 a.m. on the 13th February, 1925. On behalf of the Government of India, Colonel Minchin made a speech and presented a sword of honour and a *Khillat* to His Highness :—

Colonel Minchin said :—

"The Government of India have deputed me to invest your Highness with ruling powers, and in view of the closeness and intimacy of our relations during the past three years, no duty could give me greater pleasure. Your Highness was born on the 19th August 1904, and after the death of Raja Bhiwani Sen on the 9th February 1912, you were selected by the Government of India as successor to the Gaddi and formally installed by His Honour Sir Louis Dane, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, on the 28th April, 1913. Your Highness was first educated at the Queen Mary's College, in Lahore, and in October, 1916, you joined the Aitchison College as a day scholar, residing in a separate house under the charge of your tutor, Mr. T. Parker Gillmore. At the College your Highness was extremely popular amongst the masters and boys and made friendships which will I hope, last you all your life.

Mr. Gillmore's services were terminated in December, 1922, shortly after which your Highness left the Aitchison College and began your training in judicial and administrative work under the supervision of Pandit Avtar Kishan Kaul of the Punjab Civil Service. Thanks to the grounding Your Highness received in the various codes, which you studied with Pandit Avtar Kishan, Your Highness was able to take full advantage of your course of training in the Punjab, and I was glad to receive excellent reports from the Civil Officers under whom you worked.

Your Highness proceeded to Europe in May, 1924, and returned six months later, after what must have proved a most instructive tour in England, France, and Switzerland. On Your Highness' return to India you underwent a course of military training with the 3rd Battalion of the 17th Dogra Regiment at Alipore. I have not yet received the report of the Officer Commanding of the Regiment regarding the manner in which your Highness performed your duties, but knowing as I do the keen interest you take in your troops and your anxiety to promote their efficiency and usefulness I have no doubt that you acquitted yourself admirably. In this connection, I have much pleasure in announcing that His Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor has been pleased to grant Your Highness the honorary rank of Lieutenant with effect from the 13th February, 1925. I counsel your High-

ness to endeavour to increase your efficiency as a soldier, and thereby with speedy promotion to higher rank.

Your Highness was married in February, 1923, to the only daughter of His Highness the Maharaja of Kapurthala, and I have to congratulate your Highness on the birth of the Tikka Sahib on the 7th December, 1923.

During Your Highness' minority the Mandi State was administered by an officer of the Punjab Government assisted by an Advisory Council. Your Highness is much indebted to the British officers to whose labours the prosperity of the State is largely due. Previously to the death of Raja Bhiwani Sen, Mr. Garbett, I.C.S., joined the State as Settlement Officer in February, 1911. He was obliged through sickness to take leave 8 months later and was succeeded by Mr. Gordon Walker. On the death of His late Highness the appointment of Settlement Officer was combined with that of Superintendent of the State. Mr. Gordon Walker was relieved in 1915 by Mr. Emerson, who finally left the State in June, 1917 on the completion of the Settlement. In addition to making the revenue assessments Mr. Emerson prepared two reports on general questions connected with the settlement, which laid the foundation for the re-organisation of the State Revenue System on sound lines. He also prepared a "Wajib-ul-arz" which safe-guarded the rights and interests of both the State and the land holders. Mr. Parsons succeeded Mr. Emerson in June, 1917, and remained in charge of the administration until the 25th May, 1920, when he was succeeded by Pandit Maharaj Kishen, M.B.E., a Tehsildar of the Punjab. Pandit Maharaj Kishen worked as Superintendent till July, 1924 when he was relieved by Sardar Dina Nath, who had previously served in the Indore and Patiala States, and has been selected by your Highness for the post of Chief Secretary upon your investiture with ruling powers. Another officer to whom the State is greatly indebted is Mr. H. L. Wright of the Indian Forest Service who from 1914 to 1917 made a settlement of the Mandi Forests and prepared a Working Plan for their exploitation.

During the period of twelve years that the State had been under Government administration, great progress has been achieved. The revenue has risen from less than 5 lakhs to about 12 lakhs, and the balance in cash and investments from under a lakh and half to about eleven lakh of rupees.

Many improvements have been effected, as for instance, the Land Revenue Settlement, the Forest Settlement, the re-organization of the various services, the improvement of the salt mines, and works

of utility such as the construction of water works, guest-houses, sarais, dak bungalows, hospitals, bridges, barracks, etc. A great improvement has been effected in the construction of "Ghatta Mandi Road", which, with the co-operation of the Punjab Government, has been made suitable for motor traffic. Lastly, there is the Punjab Hydro-Electric scheme for utilising the waters of the Uhl river, which, if adopted, is expected eventually to add an annual sum of 4 lakhs to the revenue, to supply all the electric power required by the State, and provide a railway from Pathankot to Hara Bagh which should greatly promote the expansion of trade with the Punjab.

Your Highness is about to enter upon a goodly heritage, and I have every confidence that you will justify your selection by the Government of India as the ruler of the State. During the period I have been in charge of this Agency I have been very intimately associated with Your Highness, and it has been a pleasure to know that you have come to me without hesitation whenever you required advice. The years have bound us with ties of affection and esteem which I trust will never be broken. I know that Your Highness has the welfare and happiness of your people greatly at heart, and feel sure that you will do your duty by them. A Rulers best asset is a contented population. Your Highness already has the love of your people, and if you rule them with sympathy, firmness, justice and understanding, as I feel sure you will, you will enjoy the favour of the British Government as be blessed by your subjects and by prosperity.

It is fortunate that Mandi is far removed from the political dissensions with which British India is being torn. I advise Your Highness, whilst making every endeavour to exploit the resources of the State, to foster the continuance of the frugal and simple habits of the population by discouraging the influx of foreigners. The Punjab Government will always be ready to train the State officials in revenue, judicial, police, excise and other work, and Your Highness will find that it is better to utilise indigenous material for all appointments, save the highest post, rather than introduce men from the plains of India, whose habits and standard of living necessitate a much higher scale of expenditure than is customary in the hills.

In conclusion, I need hardly assure Your Highness that I shall always take the deepest interest in your welfare, and that nothing will give me greater pleasure than to learn that you are justifying the high expectations I entertain for your future".

His Highness responded in the following terms :—

"I must first of all lift up my hands in prayer and fervent

thankfulness to the Almighty God for bringing about this happy and auspicious day when I have been given the proud privilege of assuming the reins of administration of my State. May the Almighty Father give me strength and courage to do my duty by Him and by those whom He has entrusted to my care.

Next I must convey my gratitude to you, Colonel Minchin, for coming here as the worthy representative of the supreme Government to invest me with the full powers of rulership. As you are aware the Mandi State is one of the oldest principalities in India; but it entered into friendly alliance with the British Government in 1846 when Raja Balbir Sen was the ruler. But it was not given to the latter to live long and enjoy the peace and prosperity which resulted from the alliance. He was succeeded by Raja Bijai Sen of happy and revered memory, whose name will always be remembered as a true benefactor of the people. He enjoyed a long rein of peace and prosperity unchequered by any untoward circumstances. He devoted himself to the welfare of the people of Mandi State, and gave them a hospital, a school, and other works of public utility like the Victoria Suspension Bridge built across the Beas in commemoration of the Proclamation Durbar of 1877 which the Raja Sahib attended. Later on another Bridge was built over the Uhl River. Both these bridges have proved to be an inestimable boon to the people in and outside Mandi State and in developing traffic between Kullu and the plains. The death of Raja Bijai Sen in 1902 was deeply lamented and mourned over by the people of Mandi, and it is pathetic to remember that his sad demise occurred just three weeks before he was awarded the insignia of K.C.I.E., on the accession to the throne of His late Majesty King Edward VII. Raja Bhiwani Sen was the next ruler, but his was a short rule occupied chiefly by a programme of reconstruction work necessitated by the havoc caused by the terrible earthquake of 1904 in which about 1,500 lives were lost and property worth about 10 lakhs was destroyed. Raja Bhiwani Sen also built the Durbar Hall in which we are assembled today. On the sad and untimely death of the late Raja Sahib in 1912 I succeeded to the Gaddi at the tender age of 8. The administration of the State has since, and upto this day, been in the hands of the British Government. During my minority, as many as 5 Superintendents of the State had been entrusted with the work of administration, and I must take this opportunity of making an honourable mention of the very valuable work that has been done by Messrs. Gordon Walker, H. W. Emerson, and J. R. S. Parsons in various directions. During the last 12 or 13 years of this Minority Administration great many improvements have

been effected by these able and zealous officers of the Indian Civil Service. To mention only a few of these improvements I would particularly refer to the settlement of the land revenues of the State, Forest Conservation Rules, Shooting and Fishing Regulations, abolition of the "Begar" and the re-organisation of the State Forces. These officers gave their best to the State, and we shall always be very grateful to them.

During the Great War, the Mandi State was, I am proud to say, able to do its bit in the service of the King Emperor. Considering the fact that Mandi is not a big State and also bearing in mind the difficulties of its geographical situation no one can say that Mandi lagged behind other Indian States in showing its devotion to the just and true cause, championed by our beloved King Emperor. I am proud to remember that my State was able to give 1,124 recruits to the Indian Army, and gave away extensive grants of good land to its subjects in order to encourage them to go an fight in the service of the Empire at its hour of need. Over and above this, Mandi State offered about 60,000/- rupees worth of gifts, and a sum of over six lakhs was contributed by the State and its people to the War Loans. In this manner the Mandi State was able to maintain its proud traditions of unflinching loyalty and devotion to the crown ever since it came into alliance with the Supreme Government. And it will be my most earnest endeavour not to allow the lustre and glory of these traditions to be dimmed.

During the last 7 months the Mandi State has been in charge of Sardar Dina Nath, Bar-at-Law, who has had such valuable training in Indian States administration in high and responsible positions. Even during his comparatively short tenure of office he has already shown his administrative ability and many-sided gifts. I am very glad to find that Sardar Dina Nath is effecting wholesome economies and lightening the burden unnecessarily heavy State expenditure. It is a matter of gratification to me to have such an able, cultured, and loyal official as my Minister, and I feel sure that I shall derive the greatest benefit from his advice in carrying out measures of reforms and development.

As you are aware I received the benefits of education at the Aitchison College, Lahore. My tutor, Mr. T. P. Gillmore deserves my warmest thanks for discharging his responsible duties in the most conscientious manner, and my best thanks are also due to Pandit Autar Kishen Kaul of the Punjab Civil Service, who was my tutor for about a year and with whom I received my Revenue and Judicial training.

My six months trip to Europe has been of the greatest use to me; and I have just completed my Military training with the regiment of my choice the 3/17th Dogras at Alipur.

And now allow me, Colonel Minchin, to say how immense is the debt of gratitude I owe you for all that you have done for me during your period of office as Agent to the Governor-General for the Punjab States. I feel that I have not enough words to express my deep sense of gratefulness to you. On every occasion I have felt that I could

"In you with perfect faith confide,
"As in a father, brother, guide".

Colonel Minchin, you have always given me most sagacious advice, and I owe every thing of my development during the last three years to your disinterested and sincere guidance. How I wish it were possible for me to continue to have the benefit of your valuable advice, now that I am called upon to take the reins of administration in my own hands; but unfortunately the period of your office as Agent to the Governor-General is now coming to a close, and I shall very greatly miss your kindness, sympathy and good will. On this occasion you have further made me your debtor by giving me sound advice. All I can say is that I shall try my utmost to act up to this advice. I am fully aware of the great responsibility that, from this day onwards, will rest upon me. Indeed, for some months past I have been thinking of nothing else; and I must confess that there have been moments when I have actually felt overwhelmed by this sense of responsibility. I have a full realization of my responsibilities as a man; even more vivid is my sense of realization of my duties as a ruling chief. If I feel that I enjoy certain rights and privileges as a ruler. I feel even more strongly that I have certain obligations too, obligations to the King Emperor, and also to the people of the Mandi State. I am not one of those who believe that life is merely a game of pleasure. I am determined to make the best use of my life, and I shall always try to play the game. I enter on my task today in a spirit of humility, and it is my fervent prayer that the Almighty God may always keep me steadfast on the path of duty and honour. In my beloved wife, Her Highness the Rani Sahiba of Mandi, I feel proud to know that I possess a most helpful and enlightened partner of life, and I realise with a sense of great relief, how the burden of my onerous duties will be materially lightened by the presence of Rani Sahiba at my side. It will be our cherished aim to devote ourselves whole-heartedly to the service of the State, so that we may be able to leave it better and happier than we

found it. Colonel Minchin, once more let me offer you my warmest thanks for coming here on the occasion, for all that you have done for me, and for the valuable advice you have given me today".

Before and after the Investiture Mandi was *en-fête*, and the guests were entertained right royally. The fact that Mandi is 132 miles from Pathankote, and all the guests, etc. had to be brought there in motor cars and almost every thing for their entertainment had also to be imported, reflected great credit on Sardar Dina Nath and his coadjutors.

At the public Durbar held on the 14th February nazars were presented to His Highness the Raja Sahib; and he awarded Khillats to some of the principal officials of the State in appreciation of the meritorious services rendered by them during the minority.

Sardar Dina Nath was designated Chief Secretary.

THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME.

The project of the Uhl River Hydro-Electric Scheme was finally sanctioned by the Punjab Government and the proposed agreement between the latter and the Mandi Durbar was concluded on the 28th February, 1925. Under the terms of the agreement the Mandi will get a percentage of royalty on the total output of power plus a certain amount of power free of charge along with the transmission line to Mandi.

It is expected that when this wonderful feat of engineering is accomplished Mandi will be transformed in more ways than one, and will be able to develop its material resources considerably.

The name of the place where the Hydro-Electric Works are being carried on was originally Shanon, but it has been renamed Jogindar Nagar after the name of the present Ruler of Mandi. Any one who visited Shanon three years ago would rub his eyes in astonishment at the marvellous transformation that has taken place. From a very small village it has now assumed the look of a modern, busy, bustling picturesque town. To do honour to the name of the present ruler of Mandi the place has been renamed Jogindar Nagar.

HIS HIGHNESS TOURS THE STATE.

In 1925, Their Highnesses accompanied by the Chief Secretary, Private Secretary, Revenue Secretary and other officials made a

three weeks tour of Sadar, Hara Bagh and Chachiot Tehsils. The tour proved of great value from the administrative point of view. At every stage public Durbars were held and local Jagirdars and Muaffidars were received by His Highness, and the people were given an opportunity to represent their grievances to the Ruler. This easy accessibility to their Raja was greatly appreciated by the people of the ilaqas visited.

THE PRINCES' CHAMBER.

In the end of January 1926 His Highness proceeded to Delhi to take part, for the first time in the deliberations of the Chamber of Princes. He took a very keen interest in the discussions at all informal and formal meetings of the Chamber. His Highness had a private interview with Excellency the Viceroy, and also lunched with him and attended the Investiture.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

In May 1925 His Excellency Sir Malcolm Hailey, Governor of the Punjab, passed through Mandi territory on his way to Kullu, and was the guest of the Durbar at Jhatingri.

Lt.-Colonel H. B. St. John, C.I.E., C.B.E., who had succeeded Colonel Minchin as Agent to the Governor-General paid his first visit to Mandi on the 16th of May, 1925 and spent three days at the Capital. At the special request of His Highness, who was unavoidably absent during the first visit, Colonel St. John again visited Mandi in the following October.

His Highness the Raja of Suket visited Mandi on the 25th August, 1926, and the customary presentation of officials took place.

FREE AND COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION.

At the educational Durbar of 1925 His Highness announced the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in the Mandi town, and within a five miles' radius of it. This epoch-making announcement was received with acclamations by the people, who hoped that it would go a long way to remove the curse of illiteracy from within the State. If the experiment succeeded it was to be extended to other parts of the State.

ARMS ACT, 1926.

An Arms Act regulating the possession of fire-arms was passed in March 1926, and orders were issued to take a census of

fire-arms throughout the State. Another object of the Act was to protect game, which on account of indiscriminate shooting, had become very scare. With the object of preserving game shooting was prohibited for three years.

PURCHASE OF HALL ESTATE, NAGGAR, 1925.

The Hall Estate, Naggar (Kullu) was purchased by the Durbar for Rs. 46,433/- in August 1925. The Estate belonged originally to Colonel Rernick, and is one of the finest in the Kullu Valley. It has twc beautiful houses and a very extensive orchard where some of the finest fruits are grown.

HIS HIGHNESS'S SECOND VISIT TO EUROPE, 1927.

In February 1927 His Highness left Mandi for a second visit to Europe. During his absence the administration was carried on by a Council consisting of Sardar Dina Nath as President, and Mian Ganga Singh, Mian Mohan Singh, Bh. Kartar Singh, I.F.S., Conservator of Forests, Pandit Kanwar Narain, Home Secretary, Pandit Brij Bihari Lal, District and Sessions Judge and Bakhshi Brahm Dass, Revenue Secretary, as members.

CHAPTER XV.

ADMINISTRATION.

THE Mandi State came under British protection in 1846 after the 1st Sikh War, and its relations with the Paramount Power are governed by the Sanad of 1846. Before the Montford Reforms of 1919, the Commissioner of Jullundur acted as Political Agent to the Punjab Government for Kangra Hill States. The Reforms raised the status of the States, and consequently Mandi is now in direct relationship with the Government of India through the Agent to the Governor General, Punjab States.

The authority of the Ruler of the State is limited in certain directions by the fundamental Treaty of 1846. Under the Treaty the Mandi Darbar surrendered besides the usual political rights, its power to levy tolls or duties on goods, imported and exported, as also the right to fix the price of its salt.

These limitations apart the Mandi Durbar possesses full sovereign powers, or whatever is left of them after these important deductions. The chief executive power resides in the Maharaja who is also the chief magistrate as well as the one source of law. He exercises all the powers that appertain to that position. He exercises the royal prerogative of pardon; he makes laws as well as modifies and annuls them. The treaty of 1846 makes him responsible to the Paramount Power for the good administration of the State, and the former is entitled 'to remove any one from the *gaddi* of Mandi who may prove to be of worthless character or incapable of properly conducting the administration of his State.' Thus the British Government possesses large powers of interference in the affairs of Mandi, and provides the one safeguard which the people of the State possess against the chance of the abuse of their despotic authority by their otherwise absolute rulers.

The highest officer in the State after the Raja Sahib is the Diwan or Chief Minister. He is the principal executive officer reg-

ponsible for the general administration of the State. The other important officers of the State are : Education Secretary, Judge of the Chief Court, Chief Revenue Officer, Conservator of Forests, Chief Medical Officer, State Engineer, and Officer Commanding Mandi State Forces.

The annual income of the State amounted to Rs. 10,78,150/- in the year 1926-27 against an expenditure of Rs. 10,74,721/-. The main sources of income are land-revenue (Rs. 3,49,803/-) and forests (Rs. 2,73,685/-). Salt quarries are responsible for another Rs. 1,30,141/-. On the expenditure side Rs. 1,56,155/- are accounted for as the personal expenses of the Raja, Rs. 1,19,000/- cover payments made to the Government of India; education received Rs. 44,533/- while the Army consumes as much as Rs. 74,114/-. Public Works Department was responsible for Rs. 1,91,642/-. The rest was spent on the establishments of the various Departments.

For a State with a male population of nearly 1,00,000 the number of boys receiving education is not very encouraging. About 2500 boys were receiving education in 1926-27. The State has, however, made primary education compulsory in the city of Mandi, and within a radius of 5 miles from the city. A start has also been made by establishing a girls' school in the town where about 167 girls are receiving education. The State has one High School with 29 teachers and 601 students, whereas 51 rural schools employ 75 teachers teaching some 1,774 students.

Adequate medical facilities are provided in the State under the supervision of the Chief Medical Officer. The King Edward VII Hospital at Mandi does useful work, but the activities of the Zenana Hospital sometime suffer on account of the difficulty of obtaining a qualified Lady Doctor. There is a dispensary at Sirkaghat and another one has been opened at Jogendar Nagar. The State also maintains Ayur Vedic dispensaries. There is a Raj Vaid at Mandi, while two Ayur Vedic physicians have been posted in the moffusil.

For purposes of administration the State has been divided into 4 Tahsils which are further subdivided into Illaqas. The land settlement carried out by Mr. Emerson in 1917 was productive of many changes in the administration of the State. An up-to-date re-

cord of rights was prepared at that time which is proving invaluable in settling revenue cases. The Forest settlement was carried out by Mr. Wright in 1915, and records of rights of usages were carefully prepared. The State is retaining an Indian Officer of the Imperial Forest Service as its Chief Conservator, and under this arrangement the systematic exploitation and development of forest produce is helping to swell the revenue of the State.

A State geologist has been appointed who is busy carrying out a geological survey, and it is hoped that his research would yield *far-reaching results.*

The most interesting feature of Mandi administration is the fact that, like the mediaeval kings in Europe, the Raja is, in fact as well as in theory, the owner of all the land. Thus no sales can take place without his sanction, no new lands can be brought under cultivation without his permission. The landlords hold land under various forms of tenures, the most interesting of which are the grants to local gods which have been made from time to time in order to enable them to support their dignity! There are other forms of religious grants as well. Some are held by the priests serving a particular temple, others were made when a Raja was particularly charitably disposed, and still others mark some auspicious occasion in the history of the rulers of the State. But as tenures of land they do not differ much. Like feudal grants to the church, they are held on condition of performing religious services, and even when they are made to commemorate a supposed miracle, their holders are asked to pray for the Raja.

Another form of land tenure was that by military service. Originally it was very important to have a fighting army in the State, and the only way to secure this was by granting lands to the Rajput followers of the Raja. Modern conditions, however, rendered the system useless and burdensome, and at the second land settlement of the State most of these grants were resumed! Unlike their European counterparts, the feudal barons, the Rajput Jagirdars did not form an influential class, and thus such a great revolution was easily carried out. They were, however, given a status as *Malguzars,* being held responsible for the payment of land revenue. They collect rent from the actual cultivators, and pay the State demand as assessed.

Besides these many other forms of grants were customary. Though flourishing under different names, they can all be grouped together as grants made by the Rajas as the fancy took them. Sometimes a servant or a favourite had to be rewarded, at another time some needy person had to be relieved, a physician would sometime effect a cure, or a courtier would render some exceptional service.

One class of grants stands alone. They are the maintenance grants made to the members of the reigning family, male or female, for their support.

Complications arose in the past on account of the land revenue question being mixed up with that of the Begar. Begar, or the system of forced unpaid labour, began, it is said, in the seventeenth century, and is supposed to have been an extension of the ruler's right to enjoy a share in all products of his peoples' labour. Like the villains in mediæval Europe, certain classes came to pay for their possession of land by personal labour; but unlike the European villains, this cancelled only a part of their rent obligation. Recently, however, steps have been taken to terminate the more troublesome varieties of Begar, and as a general institution, getting work without paying for it, has died out.

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